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MEMOIRS

OF THE

COUNTESS DE GENLIS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE HISTORY OF THE

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

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MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE GENLIS.

THE time I passed at the Palais Royal, was at once the most brilliant and the most unhappy part of my life; I was in the zenith of my talents, and at the age when a woman joins to the freshness and the graces of youth all the accomplishments which habits of intercourse with the world can bestow. I was admired, praised, flattered, and courted; I found means of passing a large part of my time at home; I had concerts every Saturday. Gluck came to these regularly, his conversation was as agreeable as his talents were admirable: I was delighted at being applauded by him, and his praises carried my passion for music to its height; all the most celebrated performers of the day came to my concerts with an eagerness which never abated: I set apart another day for conversation parties. Every Tuesday, a very

pleasant circle of acquaintance met at my house: in short, I was constantly occupied, either in reading, or in forming plans of works, which I have since completed. I was generally beloved in the great world—so much for the brilliant side of my situation. But the malignity and the hypocrisy of several persons belonging to the Palais Royal—the constantly renewed vexations—the unlooked-for calumnies, and the pretended reconciliations of which I have been so frequently the dupe—the injustice and the slanders—all caused me the bitterest grief, which I was forced to conceal, for my situation obliged me to appear continually in society, and to do the honours of the Palais Royal when I was overwhelmed with melancholy, or overcome with indignation, and endowed with a disposition, of which the frankness went even to naïveté. I gained at least in this way the power of self-command, and acquired an empire over my passions, which I have always preserved since. No one has ever better succeeded in concealing secret griefs. There was another thing particularly disagreeable to me; on the days when we received company at the Palais Royal, one of the ladies of the Duchess of Chartres was obliged to remain after supper in the saloon as long as one or more ladies were present, who were strangers; we had all agreed to divide equally among ourselves these *forced watches;* the princess left the room exactly at mid-

night, the ladies who were not to watch followed her; but the lady who had to remain, staid till the play was finished, which lasted sometimes till three or four in the morning. For my part, I always left the card-table between eleven and twelve; so that I sometimes remained a mere spectator for whole hours. This kind of fatigue was insupportable to me; and if I quitted the table to think and reflect a little at a distance, the gallantry of my countrymen would never allow me to be alone, even for a quarter of an hour; so that, in order to relieve myself from the insipid, and to avoid those who were not so, I was compelled to return again to the card-table. I recollect however, that once I was more fortunate; the company was playing at *trente* and *quarante*; and on this evening, all the players were great gamesters, except the Prince de Ligne, one of the most amiable persons I have ever known, and who paid me particular attention, when he saw how much his conversation pleased me; he played high, though his play did not prevent him from saying a thousand gay things to me. As he lost a great deal, and with great indifference, I told him that I brought him ill-luck, and in spite of all his efforts to detain me, I left the card-table, declaring that I wished to think at my ease, and that I forbade him to follow or interrupt me: I then went and sat in a corner of the saloon, where I gave myself up to a profound reverie, and it

was in a real fit of despondency, that I composed the verses beginning thus:

> Secret ennui, sombre langueur,
> Dégoût du monde et de la vie;
> Poison qu'une main ennemie
> Semble répandre dans mon cœur, &c.

I wrote these verses before going to bed, and showed them the next day to M. de Sauvigny, who was charmed with them, and who told me, that he knew no lines so expressive of the state of mind which I had endeavoured to paint; I preserved the verses, and placed them afterwards in the *Knights of the Swan:* they are the verses which the knights find written on the lost tablets of the Duchess of Cleves.

The Duke of Chartres eagerly desired to succeed to the place of grand-admiral, then held by his father-in-law, the Duke of Penthièvre; in this hope, he insisted on making a cruise at sea, a thing which his father-in-law had never done; he was to embark at Toulon, and I persuaded the Duchess of Chartres to make a journey so far, and I even succeeded in inspiring her with a wish to see Italy. Some months previously Madame de Blot, though I had many subjects of complaint against her, came to intreat me *to join my interest to hers,* to obtain the place of lady of honour for her niece, Mademoiselle de Chauvigny, who was only fifteen, who was not married, and of whom that place would secure the

establishment. Without alluding to the past, I promised to do what she desired; and although many objections were made to the youth of the lady, I persisted so strongly in my solicitations, that I obtained the place. The young lady was immediately married, and entered on the service of the Palais Royal. She interested me by her infantine air, and she was equally amiable in face and disposition. Our journey was announced, but it was said only to be through the southern provinces; no mention was made of Italy. It was agreed between Madame de Potocka and me, that before leaving France, she should go into the southern provinces, which was not her way for returning to Poland, that she should wait for our arrival at Bordeaux, and that there we should separate. Two evenings before her departure, she supped at my house, and in talking over all I had showed her, M. de Genlis remarked, that she had not yet seen a very curious thing, the *guinguette*;* and proposed to take us next day, after supper, to the sign of the *Conqueror*, the best guinguette of the Porcherons; we accepted the offer, and it was agreed that we should all go disguised, Madame de Potocka and I as cooks, M. de Maisonneuve, a chamberlain of the king of Poland, and M. de Genlis, in livery. The

* The *guinguettes* are little taverns, a little way from town, where persons of the lower classes go to dance, drink, and take refreshments on holidays.—(*Translator.*)

next day, Madame de Potocka and I supped at the Palais Royal; Madame de Potocka was that evening splendidly dressed, wearing a robe of gold, with an enormous quantity of diamonds: at eleven M. de Genlis approached her, and reminded her very gravely that it was time to go to the Porcherons; this invitation made me burst out into laughing, addressed, as it was, to one of the most majestic figures I have ever seen in my life. We went up stairs into my room to dress, but as my mother who was in bed, wished to see our disguises, we went to dress in her chamber. The grand and noble figure of Madame de Potocka was somewhat stout, and required the advantage of dress; it lost all its dignity in disguise; and when she had put on her boddice, her red handkerchief, her checked apron, and round cap, she had really the appearance of a cook; while I, on the contrary, in the same dress, lost nothing of the elegance and gentility of my air, which was even more remarkable in this dress than in one more splendid. M. de Maisonneuve had sent an excuse in the morning; but as we wanted two gentlemen, we replaced him by M. Gillier, and we all four set out in a hackney-coach at half-past eleven. I made many conquests at the *Conqueror*, where we found a very numerous assembly; among others, that of the courier of M. de Brancas, who, in serving his master, though he must have seen me twenty times at table,

did not at all recognize me. The dress which made Madame de Potocka look older, made me look ten or twelve years younger; and we played our parts so well, that no one had any notion that we were in disguise. I began by dancing a minuet with the courier, with all the awkwardness of a peasant girl; and afterwards I danced a country dance. During this time M. Gillier ordered a sallad and pigeons *for our refreshment*. We sat down at a little table, where the gaiety and gallantry of M. de Genlis, equally divided between Madame de Potocka and me, kept us in continual laughter; there was in his gaiety something so original and agreeable, and at the same time so witty, that it could not have failed to amuse persons the most morose. An unexpected scene put the climax to our gaiety. It was customary to enter the guinguette singing, and suddenly we heard sung in the loudest tone the song—

Lison dormoit dans un bocage,
Un bras par-ci, une bras par là, etc.

On looking towards the door we saw two persons enter singing and dancing; the one drest as a maid-servant, and the other in our own livery. I recognized them immediately, and ran to embrace the maid-servant; it was my mother, who was leaning on M. de Maisonneuve's arm: she had agreed upon the party with him, and this was the reason why he did

not accompany us. Our joy and gratitude were extreme; and there was in reality a great deal of goodness and condescension in this piece of pleasantry from a person of my mother's age. She sat down at our table with her companion; she and M. de Genlis were the life of that evening, one of the gayest and most delightful I have ever spent in my life. From the time I passed at Genlis and Silleri, I had never laughed so heartily. We did not leave the Conqueror till three o'clock in the morning. M. de Brostocki was already gone into Poland. Some months afterwards his father and mother wrote to me to ask for their son the *hand* of my eldest daughter, who was not yet twelve years old: but M. de Brostocki, not having succeeded in realizing forty thousand francs a-year, which I had exacted as a condition, was obliged to give up the projected match.

The Duchess of Chartres, in going to Italy, took with her only the young Countess of Rully,* M. de Genlis, an esquire, and myself; two waiting maids, a valet, and three footmen. We passed through all the southern provinces, only stopping to attend the charming fêtes which were every where given to the prince and princess. The most brilliant were at Bordeaux, of which M. de Clugny, my relative, was the intendant. His sister-in-law, the Baroness de

* Now Duchess d'Aumont, wife of the first gentleman of the King's chamber.—(*Note by the Author.*)

Clugny, was one of the handsomest women I have ever seen; she had, among other beauties, a head of hair quite wonderful for its thickness, its colour, its beauty, and its length. I have seen her, when wearing a gown with a long train, such as was then worn, stand up, and untie her hair, which covered her entirely from head to foot, and extended half a foot beyond the train of her gown. She was neither tall nor short. Madame de Potocka accompanied us to Bordeaux. The Duke of Chartres laid the first stone of the theatre of that town, which was built by M. Louis, and is one of the handsomest in France. This ceremony was performed in the night; we were present at it. All the freemasons, of whom M. de Chartres was the grand-master, were also present. We had music and an illumination. We also saw at Bordeaux its fine port illuminated, and at sea a vessel was beautifully lighted up; all the ropes and yards seemed to be drawn in lines of light. It would have been impossible to have paid more honours to the King and Queen, than were paid to the Duke and Duchess of Chartres on this excursion,—for example, on our arrival at Bordeaux, to which we went by sea, all the vessels in the port hung out their flags, and the Mayor of Bordeaux, in his full dress, followed by all the municipal body, came to receive and make a speech to the Duke of Chartres. An immense crowd stood on the banks of the river, and

by their acclamations testified the love they bore to the family of their King.

The town of Bordeaux was at that time the only one I believe which had a Mayor, and this Mayor was always a person belonging to the court. The Viscount de Noé, who had been attached to the Palais Royal, was Mayor at this period. I was much amused also at Aix, Montpellier, and Marseilles, where we received many attentions. At Marseilles I saw, for the first time, the gallies; vessels which offer melancholy ideas of slavery to the mind, but which are very elegant in appearance. We next arrived at Toulon, where the fêtes recommenced, and lasted ten days. The most brilliant of these was that given by the naval officers. We saw, on this occasion among other things, a very beautiful sight—that of a mock sea fight. In short, the excursion was a scene of continual enchantment. What must have been the thoughts, seventeen or eighteen years after, of this very prince, when he traversed the same route, fallen from his dignity, despoiled of his wealth, a prisoner, and a proscript! . . . . The Duke of Chartres embarked to make his cruize, and we followed our project, concerted with him, of going into Italy without asking permission of the court. The Duchess of Chartres, when we were at Antibes, wrote a letter of excuse to the King, assuring him that this journey had not been premeditated, and assigning as a reason

her wish to visit her grandfather, the Duke of Modena. We met at Antibes with some very agreeable rencontres. We there found M. de Rouffignac; we had already met him at Angers, where he had a house. I had sent a courier to them to say that we should pass through the town between ėleven and twelve at night; that we should stop at his door a few moments, and that we hoped he would have the *chivalrous and romantic* gallantry to give each of us a bason of good soup—a thing which would please me so much the more, as that method of paying court to the *lady of his thoughts* was nót a common one. In fact, at the same time that he did what I desired, he found means of doing a very extraordinary thing: he kept a domesticated bear at his house; he had heard that nothing was so good as soup made of bear's flesh—so he had his bear killed, and soup made of it, which he gave us *en passant*. The soup was very red; but I have never tasted any thing so good. I felt much obliged to him for the sacrifice of his bear, and for having renewed on my account the story of the *Falcon* of La Fontaine. We were delighted to meet him at Antibes; and by a singular chance we met at the same place the Marquis of Clermont d'Amboise, the brother of Madame de la Vaupaliere, who having been appointed ambassador to Naples, was going into Italy from Antibes to Genoa. I knew M. de Clermont well: he was a wit,

a friend of the arts, and full of talents; he was an excellent musician, sang well, and had an admirable bass voice. Two very amiable young men accompanied him as secretaries to the embassy; the one was M. de Nidisdale, and the other M. de Moustiers; the latter declared himself my cicisbeo; the former that of Madame de Rully. We wished to go to Nice, and the ambassador determined on accompanying us to Genoa. We were detained ten days at Antibes waiting for favourable winds; but we did not get tired of the place. I had brought my harp with me; it was carried, not upon my women's carriage but my own; every night it was brought into my room, and I played upon it before going to bed. I do not think I omitted this more than two or three times. We had concerts every evening, which lasted two or three hours: or we conversed, and made the time pass very agreeably. At length we embarked for Nice, with the escort of a felucca, which carried a whole regiment to preserve us from the pirates; this precaution, which announced some danger, and the risk of combats and captivities, delighted my romantic imagination; and I *improvised* from it a romance, which amused my companions exceedingly. Nice is a delicious spot; we passed six days there, a great part of which I spent in walks on the flowery and perfumed mountains which surround it, or by the sea shore. Hearing that we could go to Genoa by land, in a kind

of palanquin, we suddenly determined on making this perilous voyage, which is really a terrible one.

I sent for the man of whom we hired the mules, (for the ambassador, M. de Genlis, &c.) in order to interrogate him relative to the dangers of the road. Madame de Rully was present at this conversation.

The man, after listening to me attentively, replied in these precise words: "I am not uneasy about you, ladies; but, to tell you the truth, I am somewhat afraid of my mules, for last year I lost two of them, which were killed by huge pieces of rocks that fell upon them, of which fragments often detach themselves from the mountains." This method of tranquillizing us was not very encouraging; however it made us laugh, and we set out. Before quitting Nice, I ought to mention, that the fashion of sending thither persons whose lungs are affected is a pernicious one. The air of Nice, indeed, is very pure, but it is so sharp, that it does not agree with them. Consumption is the only disorder common there, and in such cases, physicians hasten to send their patients to the neighbourhood of Lyons.

We sent our women and baggage by sea; M. de Clermont performed the journey along with us; he, Messieurs de Moustiers and de Nidisdale, and M. de Genlis were upon mules, and we in sedan-chairs. At a small distance from Nice, at a place called *La Turbie*, we found a charming arbour, all covered with wreaths of flowers, in which there was an excellent

breakfast; it was a piece of gallantry paid to the Duchess of Chartres, who travelled under the name of Madame de Joinville, on the part of the commandant of Nice. As you quit Nice, you reach the old castle of Montalban, taken by the French in 1744; two leagues farther, you see the tower of Eze overlooking the ocean; its position is admirable: in an hour we resumed our march. The name of the *cornice*, which is given to this road, is perfectly well merited; it is in fact a real *cornice*, and in many places so narrow, that a single person can hardly pass; on one side enormous rocks form a kind of wall which seems to rise to the clouds, and on the other, you see beneath a precipice of five hundred feet deep, at the foot of which, the sea, chafing against the rocks, produces a sound as melancholy as it is fearful. At all the passes which were really dangerous, we got down upon our feet, and walked on, our guides holding us by the arm. From Monaco to Manton, the road is very fine. The latter town is very agreeable; it is situated on the sea side, and is surrounded with a quantity of citron and orange trees which embalm the air. After you pass Manton, the road becomes really dreadful; however, we began to be accustomed to it, and the view of a prodigious number of fine cascades, made us almost forget the precipices we had passed. On arriving at Bourdeguierre, a little town where there are many superb palm trees, scattered through ruins with very great effect, we could not help stopping

once more to enjoy the most ravishing point of view which our eyes had yet encountered. At length, at seven o'clock, the closing evening obliged us to stop and sleep at l'Hospitaletta, the most horrible place where hospitality was ever afforded, which is only ten leagues from Nice. We all three slept in the same room; we made up for the Duchess of Chartres a kind of bed formed of the cloths of the mules and branches of trees; in the same room were two large heaps of corn, upon which, the master of the house assured us, we should sleep extremely well, and our cavaliers gave us their cloaks, to cover these heaps of grain. We were forced to sleep in a singular attitude, that is to say, almost in a standing posture; and we passed the night in a constant agitation, caused by the sliding and rustling of the heaps of corn. The daylight was an agreeable sight to all of us, and as we were already dressed, our toilettes did not interfere with our departure. The next day our journey was very fatiguing, though we only travelled five leagues and a half. But the roads were so bad that I was obliged to perform almost the whole journey on foot, still, as on the preceding evening, overlooking the sea, sometimes on the edge of a precipice, and sometimes on a narrow road covered with rough pebbles. In addition to all this, our road lay through a sterile and uninviting country, and our bearers were the the ugliest people in the world, who understood neither French nor Italian, but spoke an unintelligible jargon, and

got drunk, swore, and quarrelled continually. It was impossible not to feel interested in their disputes, when we saw them, as they carried us along the borders of a precipice, suddenly tremble with rage, and move from side to side supporting the sedan-chair with one hand only, in order to be able to make threatening gestures with the other. They suspend the chairs to their shoulders by straps of leather, but it is still necessary to hold the poles which support them. These sedan-chairs in no way resemble the ordinary chairs carried by bearers. They are a sort of long and narrow seats, and the part on which you sit is covered by a waxed cloth, to preserve you from the rain. The legs are stretched out, but you have not an opportunity of extending them; my feet passed over the seat. We were very well lodged at Saint Maurice, a little sea-port town.

The road from Saint Maurice to Albenga, is full of dangerous passes; but the road affords some admirable points of view—among others, that at the top of the mountain, which overlooks the town of Languella. The descent from the mountain is pointed with rocks and very dangerous. We descended on foot—I might almost say barefoot: for the rocks over which we had been walking for the last three days, had so worn and damaged our shoes, that the soles had almost entirely given way; and not foreseeing that we should have so much occasion to walk, we had not taken the precaution to provide ourselves

with several pairs. At ten in the morning, we caused our bearers to stop on the summit of a mountain from whence we descried the town of Albenga, in the midst of a delicious plain, which is a singularity on that coast, all the other towns being situated on the heights. At the foot of a mountain lay a wide and fertile plain, surrounded with high rocks and majestic mountains, of which the summits were covered with ice. The sterility of the rocks, and the imposing aspect of the mountains, formed a singular contrast with the beauty and fertility of the plain; the meadows are enamelled with hearts-ease and lilies; the laurel-rose grows without culture; the fields are all encircled with long arbours of grapes; and through this beautiful open work, you discover the verdure, fruits and flowers, inclosed within these light fences, of which every arch is adorned with garlands of ivy, which yield and move to every breath of wind; it seems as if, in this delicious abode, the earth were not cultivated for the wants of man, but only for his delight. Every object which meets the eye is agreeable. There you see the real shepherds; all the young girls wear their hair with a bouquet of real flowers placed on the left side of the head. They are almost all pretty, and particularly remarkable for the elegance of their shape.

To avoid passing a mountain which was excessively dangerous, we embarked at Pictra, and sailed three leagues and a half by sea. At Nori we resumed o--

sedan-chairs. From the heights of the mountain which overlook the towns of Anvaye and Savona, the eye commands one of the most splendid views in the world; it is one of the most remarkable after Albenga. Savona is a handsome town, very agreeably situated at only twelve leagues from Genoa. At the village of Abbessola, a short league from Savona, you see the palaces of Rovero and Durazzo, both of which are extremely magnificent; the gardens are extensive but in bad taste. I remarked there a thing somewhat singular; that none of the natural plants of the soil grow there, except the orange-tree, but the box-tree is cultivated there with the utmost care, and the superb vases which adorn the terraces are full of it. This hideous box-tree is placed in these beautiful vases, only because it is more expensive and rarer than the myrtle, the jasmine and the laurel-rose.

Our journey, which is one of the most dangerous, though, at the same time curious, which can be undertaken, passed off gaily and without any accident; we took six days to go forty leagues. The dread of the precipices made me walk more than three-quarters of the way on foot, over pebbles and broken rocks. I arrived at Genoa with my feet swelled and blistered, but in excellent health. We have had so many journeys in Italy, that I shall not detail ours at length; I shall only speak of our personal adventures. The ambassador accompanied us to Reggio, where we passed eight days. We were then in the do-

minions of the Duke of Modena, grandfather of the Duchess of Chartres. The aspect of Lombardy is gay and agreeable; the trees are not lofty, but their verdure is very bright, and they are all connected by beautiful garlands of ivy. The whole view was so enchanting that the Duchess of Chartres cried out in an ecstacy, that *her grandfather was too complaisant!* She thought at first sight, that the ornaments we admired so much, were part of a fête which he intended to give her. The Duke of Modena received the Duchess of Chartres, with much joy and tenderness. This good prince was then eighty years of age; he was blind and had a very singular countenance. He wore red and white paint, and painted his eye-brows; his nose was of prodigious length; I never saw a face like his. The court was composed of his two sisters, much younger than he. These two princesses had never been married; they were good, obliging, and pious.* The hereditary prince, son of the duke, was very affable, but his gallantry was far from delicate. His daughter was the Archduchess Mary, a princess extremely distinguished for her education and her disposition. The Archduke Ferdinand, her husband, had a handsome face; he was very like the

* Some time after, one of these princesses died of a decline, preserving her senses to the last moment. A few days before her death, she distributed with her own hands the legacies she left by will to her friends; her jewels and snuff-boxes, of which she had a fine collection, and used for herself a snuff-box of horn.—*(Note by the Author.)*

Duchess of Polignac, and his hair was of remarkable beauty. I shall now relate an adventure which will illustrate the manners of these little courts, of which the princes were always the best in all respects. The person who had the best place at the court, was the Count de Lascaris; he was about forty; he was short and stout; and his face was as ignoble as his size. I had the honour of making his conquest at first sight. He was superintendant of the palace, and assigned the apartments; he took care to place M. de Genlis in the palace of Modena at an immense distance from me; he gave me superb apartments, all fitted up with glasses, even the roof. One evening that, according to custom, I had gone to my room after supper, to write my journal, before going to bed, as I was sitting at my little portable table, I heard near me some noise, and lifting my eyes, I saw with great astonishment a glass pannel, which I had not supposed to be a door, move, and open gently, and in a moment M. de Lascaris appeared, and threw himself at my feet with an air of triumph. I rose up—my table fell—the candle went out—and we were in complete darkness. I called loudly for my chambermaid, who ran into the room with a candle in her hand. M. de Lascaris rose in fury, returned to his glass pannel, and disappeared. Unfortunately, in the confusion, M. de Lascaris had received a terrible wound on the cheek. The adventure was speedily known through the indiscretion of my servant, and partly through mine.

Every body asked M. de Lascaris what was the matter with his cheek; and this caused in him a mingled embarrassment and anger which were quite risible. From this time, he was much less gallant to me, and I was much more gay with him. Our stay at the court was spent in continual fêtes. I have related in my *Souvenirs* the story of the mad woman who endeavoured to strangle me at Reggio—a danger from which I so valorously preserved myself by giving the only blow with my fist I have ever given in my life.

The following was the circumstance I refer to; two days after my arrival at Modena, I passed part of the night at a ball given by the court; next morning my servant, who had received orders not to wake me till noon, went down stairs early, leaving me alone in my apartments, which occupied the whole of the floor. At nine o'clock I heard a door open, and saw a tall and stout woman advance towards my bed; I called to her in Italian, that I did not wish to be awoke yet; but she burst into immoderate laughter, and running towards my bed, she seized a pillow and put it over my face. I then guessed that my visitor was a mad woman. The danger in which I was, gave me supernatural courage; there was no bell at the bed's head; besides, my servant had gone down stairs, and I was the only person on that floor. I slipped out of bed from the opposite side, with the intention of reaching the door, which the mad woman had fortunately left open; but she ran towards me as if to seize me, barring my passage. As

I walked very awkwardly without shoes, and barefooted, I saw that I could not avoid the mad woman, who stretched out two horribly robust arms to catch me.... Her walk, however, was uncertain, like that of a drunken person, and she laughed continually aloud. I thought of trying to throw her down, while her convulsive laughter prevented her from using her strength, and I waited for her, if not with perfect firmness, at least with decision. When she came quite near me, I gave her on the breast the first blow with the fist I have ever applied in my life; she fell on the floor with a sound which made the whole room echo. After this brilliant victory, I flew out of the room and ran down stairs, calling loudly for assistance. My own servant, two footmen, and a valet-de-chambre of Madame de Chartres came to my aid. I sent them to seize the mad woman, and remained on the stair wrapped in my maid's gown. They found the woman lying on the floor still laughing; but her extraordinary gaiety ceased when they wished to remove her; she fought most furiously, and kicked and scratched prodigiously. However, after a violent struggle, they succeeded in removing her. The woman, who was twenty-eight years old, and had been a servant in the palace for more than ten years, had lost her reason only two or three days previously, and none of her comrades were yet aware of it. However, one of our companions, the young Countess de Rully, might have told us of it, but she did not, in consequence of a naïveté, of which I

must here quote an instance. Madame de Rully was then fifteen, but she was much younger than her years, and though she had naturally a good understanding, her ignorance and her simplicity were extreme. In the early part of our journey all the customs that were different from ours, caused in her a surprise, which often degenerated into mockery. I often lectured her upon this, but at length my arguments had an effect which infinitely surpassed my expectations. The evening before my adventure, the servant, who was already mad, came into her room: Madame de Rully was dressing for the ball, when the servant took up a water-jug, and threw it over her head. Madame de Rully, who was now accustomed to strange manners, fancied it was the custom of the servants of Reggio to practise this manœuvre. Her servant got angry, but her mistress checked her, saying, that it was wrong to offend foreigners by blaming their habits. She went and shut herself in a room dry herself, never saying a word to any of us relative to the accident: but she told us all after my exploit, when the servant was proved to be insane.

The Neapolitan ambassador parted from us at Reggio, in order, as he said, to go to Naples, to provide lodgings for us. The Duchess of Chartres at this court, as throughout Italy, met with the utmost admiration, and was generally admired for the dignity of her manners, her air, her sweetness, her affability, the intelligence of her questions, and the justness of

her observations and her answers. We were to go from Modena to Mantua, which belonged to the Archduke Ferdinand. He consulted me privately on the manner in which he ought to receive her; he intended to go beforehand to prepare every thing for her reception; I dissuaded him from it, and gave him to understand that the most desirable thing for a fatigued traveller, who was only to remain two days, was not to be forced to dress; the prince completely comprehended me. We arrived at Mantua towards the night; the moats about the town were filled with the fire-flies which I had before seen on the cornice of Genoa; but in these moats, the enormous number and their constant motion produced a beautiful effect, lighting all the herbage round them. One was caught, which was put into the carriage, and when wrapt in a piece of paper, it gave so much light, that a note might be read by it when placed near it. We resided at Mantua, in the fine palace of the archduke; there was no one there but the servants, but they served us with all the zeal imaginable. All the apartments were so lighted up, that one could see the pictures as if at full noon. A magnificent supper was served, during which music was played in the adjoining apartment. The pleasure of enjoying all this without the fatigue of ceremony, dresses, and compliments, delighted us all. M. de Genlis, who was always so agreeable from his sallies, and his gaiety, was particularly so at Mantua; and in

mockery of the pedantic and affected travellers who visited the place, he pretended to think only of Virgil. He quoted a thousand passages from the Æneid, and every moment he cried out, " Oh Virgil, oh swan of Mantua!" . . . . and all this with a tone and manner which made us burst with laughter.

There was a very handsome theatre within the palace. The following day, an opera was performed for the princess, the theatre was filled with the people of the town; we sat in the archduke's boxes, and went to take ices between the acts in the anti-room of the box. We had occasion to admire at this opera, a spectacle which was really magical, formed by hollow crystal pillars, in which were placed burning torches.

The towns which struck me the most in Italy, were the following; Venice, of which the first view did not seem to me so surprising as I had been prepared to expect; Rotterdam, amidst its waters, with its draw-bridges hung on chains, its trees, and its forest of masts, appeared to me much more singular and more handsome; but all the *details* of Venice are astonishing. The buildings, which are almost all planned by Palladio, though in a beautiful taste of architecture, are blackened by time; Venice has a very melancholy aspect; the canals are black from their depth; the gondolas are painted black, and resemble coffins floating upon waves of ink. As there are few foot passengers, you neither hear the sounds of the streets,

nor the noise of a coach; every thing is sad and silent, and you would suppose yourself in a city enchanted by an evil fairy. If you let any thing fall out of the window, it is lost for ever, as it happened to me one morning. I thus lost a beautiful seal. We resided with the Baron de Zugmantel, born in Switzerland, and our ambassador at Venice, an excellent man, who spared no pains to render our residence at Venice agreeable; but here, the public orders of the senate did not allow any noble Venetian to visit the ambassador; so that the whole *corps diplomatique* were reduced to the society of their own members. Each ambassador's lady had, besides her residence at Venice, what was called her Casino. This was a pretty little suite of rooms on the Piazza di San Marco. The wife of the Spanish ambassador was extremely amiable; we enjoyed a great many parties, musical and others at the Casino. The harp was unknown in Venice and throughout Italy. I excited great admiration through my talent for that instrument. We saw all that Venice contains of curiosities. I kept three journals at once—that of the Duchess of Chartres, which she recopied by degrees; and that of Madame de Rully, which she copied in the same manner. I did not give them mine to copy, because it was filled with reflections and details, which concerned myself only, and which they would have been obliged to extract also. I found it amusing

to write that of Madame de Rully, writing it in an infantile style, which I had very nicely seized, and which rendered it very original. I had become attached from my heart to this young person, who called me her *little mother*, and of whom I really was the Mentor in all respects. On our journeys we always slept in the same room, and as our attendants never arrived till after us, (for we took always the best horses,) I took care of her as my own child. Her health was very delicate, and she had a blister on her arm, which I used to dress. I looked to her diet, and she supported admirably well the fatigues of the journey. Besides this, I dictated her letters to her family, which were much praised, and contributed greatly to establish her in the favour of her mother-in-law. Madame de Rully was as amiable as a young woman of fifteen can be who has received a very indifferent education; she was clever, gay, frank, docile, and full of feeling.

We witnessed at Venice the famous entertainment of the Bucentaur, which had been retarded on account of the bad weather. It was so called, because this was the name of the superb gilt vessel in which the doge, accompanied by the senate in their robes of ceremony, was to wed the Adriatic. The doge and the senate went first to the church of Saint George to hear divine service; they then embarked in the Bucentaur, where they were distinctly seen

through the windows of the vessel. The whole of the population of Venice in their gondolas followed. The gondolas of the ambassadors alone were painted and decorated. After sailing about for a short time, the doge opened a little glass window, and drawing from his finger a gold ring, he dropped it into the sea, saying, with a loud voice, that he *espoused it*. Besides the time of the carnival, there were several periods when no one at Venice went out without masks; we happened to be there at one of these epochs, at which Madame de Rully was particularly delighted.

The gondoliers of Venice were very remarkable for their musical taste. They had admissions to the opera from father to son, and such a taste for music and poetry, that they sung by ear the *Jerusalem Delivered;* and among these compositions there were always found some so pretty, that every year they were engraved under the title of *Barcaroles*. Many went to hear them sing in the evenings. They sung either in chorus, or by turns, replying to each other; and always with infinite elegance. I fear I cannot flatter myself with the hope, that our hackney coachmen will some day set to music and sing the odes of Rousseau.

As may be supposed, the city which I saw with most enthusiasm was Rome. The Cardinal de Bernis, to whom I had communicated the arrival of the Duchess of Orleans, sent his nephew, the Che-

valier de Bernis, to meet her, as far as Terni, with two carriages, the one, which was magnificent, to carry her to Rome, and the other loaded with an excellent dinner. We had stopped at Terni, to see the grand and famous cascade, which falls five hundred feet; we were there when the chevalier arrived; he joined us, and we all went together to the inn to eat his excellent dinner. On leaving table we set out for Rome, which we entered by the Gate of the People; my emotion was so great, that in my enthusiasm, I embraced all in the carriage, and without perceiving it, my face was bathed in tears. The pleasantries of M. de Genlis altogether changed my disposition; and I began to say a hundred lively things, for I really felt as if my head was affected. The cardinal received us with a kindness of which nothing can give an idea. He was then sixty-six, in excellent health, with a fresh coloured complexion, and in his manner there was a mixture of goodness and archness, of dignity and simplicity, which rendered him one of the most interesting persons I ever knew. I never saw any magnificence surpassing his; we resided at his house, with our valets and female attendants; their table was served like his own. He assigned me splendid apartments, and every morning after breakfast an immense tray was brought into my room loaded with ices and little pots of *blanc-manger*, which were renewed three or four times

a-day. At table he always sat between the Duchess of Chartres and me. These dinners, which consisted of every delicacy, brought to his house the best company, and all the illustrious foreigners at Rome. The cardinal did the honours inimitably. I bathed often at Rome, especially in the evenings; and as soon as I was in the bath, the cardinal, accompanied by his nephew, came to talk three quarters of an hour with me. He related an infinite number of charming anecdotes; he told me, that at the age of forty-three he possessed no ecclesiastical dignity, and no fortune, but that he had many debts, and that at forty-five his fortune was made. He told me, that when he was dismissed, he said to his friends, "Do not eulogize my understanding or my talents; your praises would be suspected, and would be useless to me: but you have a right to take the part of my disposition and my heart—defend these." He told me also many interesting traits of Pope Ganganelli; he was a saint, and a man of superior talents. I spoke to him of the morals of the Romans; he said, that they were not good in the higher classes; but that at least even in these ranks, there was no atheism, that there was a solid foundation of religion, to which the mind always sincerely returned when the passions were gone; he added, that among the lower classes, there was great purity of morals, and that adultery was very rare, but that persons of

the lowest rank were terribly violent, which he ascribed to the heat of the climate, for murders, he had remarked, were very frequent during the month of August. Assassinations were committed, not for plunder, nor from premeditated vengeance, but from passion. The streets of Rome were not lighted in the summer; people walked about all night, and it is remarkable, that there were neither murders nor robberies. When I asked the cardinal the reason, he told me that it was a secret; but he was polite enough to say he would communicate it to me. He informed me, that it was generally thought that the cardinals walked by night through the streets, and the people, persuaded that the murder of a priest is the greatest of crimes, did not venture to attack any one, lest they should kill a cardinal in disguise. Besides my excursions with the Duchess of Chartres, I made several others acompanied only by the Chevalier de Bernis, which I could do with perfect propriety, he being then more than fifty. In this manner we visited several ruins by moonlight, and among others the Coliseum, the finest of them all. I expressed a wish to ascend the *scala santa;* this is a staircase, said to be brought from Jerusalem, which tradition assures us was the very stair from which our Saviour descended on the day of his passion. It is entirely covered with copper, and the steps are very high; you are allowed only to ascend them kneeling, but

you are not permitted to walk down. At the top of the stair is a little landing-place, where there is a door, by which you go out; this piece of dovotion is generally performed in the night. I went thither at midnight with the Chevalier de Bernis, and we mounted the *scala santa.* Several indulgences are attached to this act of devotion. I was much edified with the great number of persons, both men and women, who were mounting this stair with an agility which proved that it was habitual to them; but the half-suppressed groans of the Chevalier de Bernis were much less edifying to me; he followed me slowly, always five or six steps behind me; he found infinite difficulty in ascending these lofty steps, all covered with copper; besides he had the gout, and the motion occasioned him very severe pain. On his arrival at the top he was quite lame, which obliged us to abridge our usual nocturnal excursion.

I received moreover several times the benediction of the pope, and I went almost daily to wonder and pray at St. Peter's. I have never in my life seen but two things which surpassed all that my imagination could picture to me beforehand; these are the Ocean, and St. Peter's at Rome. The Cardinal de Bernis gave me a beautiful chaplet of *lapis lazuli,* which I afterwards gave to my pupil, the present Duke of Orleans. We saw at Rome one of the most imposing religious ceremonies—the *Fête Dieu;* and

we also witnessed in returning from Naples the festival of St. Peter: we were in the same balcony with the Duke of Gloucester, who, though a protestant, was strongly affected by the grand and pious ceremony: this prince was full of goodness and affability; he loved the arts, and was a judge of them. On St. Peter's day there were eighteen organs in the church all playing at once, but they produced no more effect than one good organ in a church of ordinary size. It seems as if you had never seen the Deity really honoured, until you have been present at his worship in this admirable temple dedicated to his glory. I am sure even an atheist would be touched, if not converted, on such an occasion.

We were besides witnesses of the entrance into Rome of the Grand Constable Colonna, and of the procession of the *Mare*, which the court of Naples presented to the pope; a numerous assemblage conducted this mare, superbly harnessed, into the church of St. Peter's, where she was presented to the pope; this whimsical ceremony, which had lasted so long, was abolished two years afterwards. In a second journey to Rome, we saw the splendid illumination for the festival of St. Peter, the fireworks of the castle of St. Angelo, and the celebrated illuminations of the grandest cupola in the universe.

The Cardinal de Bernis invited the Duchess of Chartres to magnificent *conversaziones;* that is to

say, to assemblies of two or three thousand persons. He was commonly styled the *king of Rome,* and he was so, in reality, from his liberality and magnificence, and the consideration in which he was held. At Rome I saw the celebrated Winckelmann, who was librarian to the Cardinal Albani, and keeper of his fine cabinet, which we went to see at the *Albani Villa,* as the country-houses are called at Rome. Winckelmann showed me an antique *basso relievo,* representing a female satyr, the only antique monument, he said, on which that figure was to be found. Cardinal Albani, who had the finest collections in Italy, was so passionately fond of antiques, that when their possessors refused to sell them, he stole them. On this subject I heard an extraordinary anecdote, which was told me by the Cardinal de Bernis, ten other persons, and the victim of the act himself, who was the Prince of Palestrina, of the house of Colonna, then seventy-two years old, whom the Cardinal de Bernis had made me take for my *cavalier servente.* The following is the story. The Prince of Palestrina had, in the garden of his country-house, a superb antique obelisk, which he refused to sell to the Cardinal Albani, who was anxious to make the purchase of it, at whatever price it might cost him. A short time afterwards the prince went on a journey, and the cardinal sent four thousand men in the night, who entered the garden by force,

carried off the obelisk, and brought it to the cardinal, who placed it in his garden at the Albani Villa. As the cardinal was exceedingly powerful at Rome, the prince did not dare to bring an action against him, but took the thing in good part, and instead of quarrelling with him, contented himself with congratulating him upon his extraordinary exploit. As we were walking in the Albani gardens, the prince showed me this famous obelisk. The Prince of Palestrina, was father of the Duchess of Cerifalco, who passed nine years in a subterranean cave—an astonishing history, which I have related in *Adèle et Theodore*. The prince gave a fête to the Duchess of Chartres, and the duchess was present through respect to a princess of the house of Bourbon, for she lived in the greatest retirement, being subject, since her misfortune, to epileptic fits; she only remained a quarter of an hour at the entertainment, and I went and placed myself near her, in order to have a good opportunity of seeing her. Though she was but forty-six years old, she looked sixty-six. She had no longer any vestiges of beauty; her appearance struck me, and I drew her portrait afterwards from nature; her head and eyes were inclined towards the ground, and from time to time she had attacks of shuddering. The prince told me the whole story, of which I have put many details into my episode. This unfortunate lady had the mildness

and the piety of an angel. She never knew, nor could any one ever discover, why her barbarous spouse shut her up in the cave. Religion, which is always useful in all things, was the means of saving her life; for the monster, who still preserved some religious sentiments, did not dare to poison her; and when he himself was on his death-bed, he confided to his valet the secret, that for family reasons, he had confined in a subterraneous cavern a woman who was at once mad and criminal. He did not acknowledge that this wife was his own, who was believed to have been dead for nine years. The valet-de-chambre, on receiving the key of the cavern, went to succour the unfortunate woman, who had wanted food for two days; he knocked in vain at the door—she did not come to receive her bread and water,—she had fainted; the servant entered, gave her the necessary assistance to enable her to get up, recognized her, left her nourishment for several days, and left her the key of the cavern; but being obliged to remain with the duke, he sent a courier to Rome to the Prince of Palestrina, with a note from the duchess, who, in four lines and a half, acquainted him with her existence, and demanded his aid. The prince, followed by all the members of his family, went to the king of Naples, and related the melancholy history. The king gave him a regiment to escort him to the château of the duke, in case force

should be found necessary. When the Prince of Palestrina arrived, the duke was still living; he was told, on the part of the prince, that his crime was known, and that his victim was about to be released; the duke expired a few hours afterwards. The prince had preserved most preciously his daughter's note; at my earnest entreaty he showed it me; I gazed a long time at this little bit of paper; the handwriting, the expressions, the words, almost all of which wanted the last syllable—all was precious in my eye.

A singular remark, and which I believe has never been made, is that in cases where the memory has been lost without any change in the reasoning faculties, it is always the last syllables of the words which are forgotten. It was thus that Alexander Selkirk, an English sailor, who was found after a lapse of twenty-five years on a desert island, still spoke English quite well, excepting the last syllables, which he had forgotten. I have remarked the same phenomenon in a person who was young, but blind for fourteen years, to whom, as I shall hereafter relate, I restored the faculty of writing.

Our residence at Naples was as agreeable as that at Rome. In traversing the Pontine Marshes, we met the hermits, whom I have introduced into the story called *The Hermits of the Pontine Marshes*.

When in 1800 I returned from a foreign country into France, I learned that the Dowager Duchess of

Orleans was making interest to return thither, and that the first Consul did not seem disposed to agree to her wishes. It was at that time that I bethought myself of relating an interesting anecdote of her, and of which the close represents her as returning to France, and expressing on the bridge of Beauvoisin, many touching sentiments on the delight of revisiting her native country, even after a short absence. I inserted this little novel, two months after my return, in a newspaper, and afterwards into the *Bibliothèque des Romans*. This novel met with great applause: it was separately printed; but it had not the effect I had hoped for; it displeased the court of that day. The Duchess of Orleans was not *recalled;* but I had the satisfaction of having made an effort, which was not without its attendant risks, in favour of suffering innocence and virtue.

We lodged at Naples in the ambassador's hotel, where he gave splendid fêtes to the Duchess of Chartres. We were presented at court; and while on this subject I shall relate an adventure which will show in what manner the police was organized at Naples. We arrived at noon, and in passing through the Strada di Toledo, a street which is as public as the Rue Saint Honoré, we were robbed of two portmanteaus, which contained our servants' liveries, and the hoops and trains of our court dresses. As our couriers were a good way before us, we did not per-

ceive our loss, and the passengers, apparently thinking such a thing quite common, never gave us the least intimation of it. We were extremely inconvenienced by this robbery, as we wanted our dresses in order to be presented next day. The ambassador borrowed two for us from two ladies of his acquaintance, but the hoops being much larger than ours, shortened our gowns greatly, and gave us a very ridiculous appearance at court. The ambassador related our adventure, which occasioned much laughter. The king * promised the ambassador that our hoops should be restored, and that we were to address ourselves on his part for that purpose to an officer of justice whom he named, desiring him to cause the chief of the band to come before him, and to order him, in the king's name, to give up our hoops. All this was done, and our hoops were given up gratuitously; but as there was no royal order for the restitution of the liveries, we were told, that in order to recover them, we must pay for them, which we did. It is clear from this that the robbers were permitted to exercise their calling by the government, to whom they paid a tribute. When Madame de Rully and I were presented to the king and queen, the ambassador told us, that immediately after our last curtsey, we were to take three steps backwards to avoid kissing the queen's hand, who would without

* This is the prince who died suddenly of apoplexy on the fourth of January, 1825.—*(Note by the Author.)*

this ceremony present it for that purpose—an etiquette to which no Frenchwoman submitted: this seemed to me surprising, the etiquette in France being much more offensive; for you were there obliged to bend almost to the ground, and pulling off your glove, you seized the hem of the queen's gown in order to kiss it. It is true that she was content with that demonstration of your intention, and withdrew her gown before you had time to carry it to the lips. What I thought extraordinary at the court of Naples was, that the king also gave his hand to the ladies to kiss; this is never done in France; but when he proceeded to dinner he made all the ladies pass before him—a piece of gallantry which the French kings do not practise. We dined twice with the king. This princess very much resembled the Queen of France; she was less brilliant and majestic, but her physiognomy expressed mildness, and her manner was full of grace; she was accomplished, her understanding was good, and she had read much; she was fond of music, and sung agreeably in Italian. We saw her several times in her own apartments, giving lessons to the princesses, her daughters. She explained to them history by means of engravings, and extremely well. We saw also the young prince, who was not yet weaned. His nurse was a Calabrian peasant. The queen insisted on her continuing to wear the dress of a peasant, which I thought was in good taste. The child was so much accustomed to

be in his mother's arms, that when she was about to leave the room, he cried; which shows how much time she must have passed among her children.

As M. de Clermont had praised highly my performances on the harp, and as that instrument was not known in Italy, the queen was very desirous of hearing me play. She requested this favour with much grace, saying that *she and I would have some music together*, and that she would sing. This little concert took place in my cabinet; it began with the harp; the queen, in order to witness my performance, sat close to me on my right hand, and was so overcome with enthusiasm, that in her transports she kissed my hand. It was this that made M. de Clermont say in the evening, alluding to my presentation, that though I had refused to kiss the queen's hand, she had kissed mine. At the concert, M. de Clermont sung a duet with the queen; and the king himself sung, through gallantry towards the Duchess of Chartres, a French song, at least a hundred years old. His royal voice did not please me so much as that of the queen. This prince, who was very kind and affable,* had received so careless an education,

* He was so affable, that when he rode out on horseback about Naples, he took a very long time to traverse the town, because he perpetually stopped to give the people opportunities of approaching him, speaking to him, and kissing his hand, which he presented to all that came near him.—*(Note by the Author.)*

that he did not even know Italian well; he spoke the Neapolitan, which was the reason why all the comic operas (a kind of entertainment of which he was particularly fond) were written in that dialect. Let us but imagine an usurper amidst his counsellors, only able to speak a particular jargon of his country's language; such an usurper, were he the most renowned of conquerors and warriors, would appear in such a case insupportably ridiculous; but legitimacy ennobles every thing; and the respect which it inspires, being founded at once upon justice, custom, and opinion, can only be destroyed by vices and bad actions, and not by frivolous defects, which belong neither to the mind nor the disposition. Besides, the King of Naples was then extremely young; and he has since gained by experience, by study, and by his conduct, all that can give personal dignity to a sovereign. The queen desired me to send her a harp-player from Paris, and I sent her the young Hinner, who had a very pretty talent for that instrument.

I witnessed at Naples a thing that interested me much; this was the unrolling of the burnt manuscripts; the inventor of that ingenious and long operation performed it before us; but he had no assistants, and the work advanced but very slowly. He was unrolling at this time a work upon music.

The beauty of the climate of Naples is incomparable, as is that of its bay, its views, and its environs,

so curious in other respects, for so many wonders of nature, all of which we particularly examined. We went frequently to the country-house of the Princess of Francavilla. We found in her garden pine-apples growing in the open air; they were delicious, and M. de Genlis said they were as good as those of India. They were placed in a hollow plate when they were to be cut, and the plate was immediately filled with juice. The Princess of Francavilla, however, was the only one who had them; no other person cultivated them; even the King had none. At Naples I ate the finest and best figs I ever tasted in my life; they were as large as fine pears.

We did not ascend Vesuvius, because at this moment it was throwing out fiery sparks and stones. We saw with admiration the new-discovered antique city of Portici, and the grotto of Posilippo. One of the things which charmed me most was the garlands of vines which throughout the country hung betwixt all the trees. We had already seen the same method of cultivating the vine exemplified in Lombardy; but in the latter country the trees are small, whereas in the environs of Naples they are all very tall and majestic.

In one of our excursions with the ambassador, he played us a trick which alarmed us all. He made us pass along the quay, which is frequented by the lazzaroni, (where women never go,) and where they are

allowed to walk about quite naked, without shirts, vestments, or linen of any kind. All their bodies, as well as their faces, is of a deep red, which gives them the appearance of frightful savages.*

The evening before our departure, we went to visit the celebrated *chartreuse* of Saint Martin, which no woman is permitted to enter. The Duchess of Chartres, however, had a license from the pope to enter it with all her attendants. In this monastery is to be seen the famous *crucifixion* of Michael Angelo, of which the wonderful truth of expression has given rise to a story which has been seriously repeated, that Michael Angelo had the barbarity to paint it from a man whom he had caused to be secretly crucified in his painting-room—a calumny as absurd as atrocious, which at first may have arisen from the exaggeration of his eulogists, and afterwards passed into a popular story; but which the whole life of the artist and the impossibility of the fact conspire to disprove.

We left Naples, enchanted with the town, its environs, the court, and our ambassador, who had given us the most charming entertainments. We resided also at another court—that of Parma. The infant, though a pupil of the celebrated Condillac, the *philosopher*, was, nevertheless, remarkable for his great piety; we were struck with his resemblance to the Duchess

* This practice has long ceased to exist.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

of Chartres, of whom he had also the goodness of heart and amiable disposition. The infanta, a sister of the Queen of France, was a very extraordinary princess; an infinite number of anecdotes are related of her, which I shall here pass over in silence, because they may be either false or greatly exaggerated; but it is certain that she loved nothing so well as hunting, and that a great part of her life was spent in the woods on horseback; she had a great wish to hear me play on the harp, but I refused, alleging as an excuse, that my harp was out of order; but I played at the request of our ambassador's lady, the Countess of Flavigny, who had promised me that there should only be present six of her friends, who would never divulge the secret. We resided at the palace. I had my harp carried to Madame de Flavigny's, and I began to play immediately after supper. I had not played more than ten or twelve minutes, when suddenly the two folding doors of the room were thrown open, and the infanta appeared; this was like a clap of thunder to me. The infanta, with a great deal of grace told us, that we had been *betrayed*, and that she hoped I would not prevent her from profiting by my complaisance for Madame de Flavigny. I made a brief excuse, and thinking that the best thing I could do was to play on the harp as much as she wished, I made the sacrifice with a good grace, appearing only to be occupied with the wish

of pleasing her. Her gratitude was extreme. The next day she spoke of nothing but my harp, and said that her head was so full of it, that in writing to the empress her mother, a whole page of her letter was devoted to my performance.

To conclude the history of the courts of the queen's* sisters, I have broken the thread of my journey, for from Naples we returned to Rome, where we passed a fortnight more. The cardinal on our departure paid a piece of attention to the princess, which threatened to cost us dear: he had caused new wheels to be put to our carriage. These wheels not being proportioned to the carriage, it was impossible to drive quickly over the finest road in the world without overturning—an accident which happened to us at a quarter of a league from Rome; the coach fell towards the Duchess of Chartres's side, and as I believed her to be more than five months gone with child, I was afraid to fall upon her; so I threw myself on the first alarm towards the other side of the coach, broke the window and cut my head; and while they were raising the coach up, we walked on foot to seek shelter in a wretched hedge-alehouse, called La Storta, which was on the road; we sent off a courier to Rome to demand the old wheels, which the Chevalier de Bernis, escorted by a cart which carried them,

* Of France.

brought back to us. We performed all the rest of the journey with these wheels, and without any accident; they were of the manufacture of Simon, so famous in this branch of business. We returned into France by Turin. We remained at that court eight or ten days; where we saw again with great interest Madame Clotilde, the wife of the Prince of Piedmont; that princess, endowed with all the virtues, was united to a prince worthy of her, by his piety, his beneficence, and his exemplary life. We passed Mount Cenis, which at that time was covered with flowers, intersected by cascades and torrents; it is impossible to give any idea of this enchanting view; at that time no one could cross this mountain but in a sedan-chair carried by men, and the road, difficult and dangerous as it was, immortalized the king who had commanded its construction. We read the inscription, which it bore, that this prince "had opened this free road of commerce to the nations." In this respect, we owe much greater praise to Napoleon, who has converted this very passage into a real and superb road, which may be passed in a carriage. I have not mentioned Florence, where the court was not, nor several other towns in which we passed some time; but as an amateur of music, I owe a separate article to Italian operas. A singular chance enabled us to see in this way an extraordinary exhibition: there lived in the little town of Forli a private individual

very rich and passionately fond of music, who had erected at his own expense a vast theatre of wood, and who determined to profit by the summer season, when all the great musical performers are at liberty and on their excursions, to assemble them at Forli, and to make them act operas. Not only the actors were the most famous of the day, but the orchestra was composed of all the great musicians of Italy; such a novelty had attracted so large a number of strangers, that the town was surrounded with tents on purpose to accommodate a part of them. We arrived the evening before one of these performances; we had much trouble in securing a miserable lodging, which was given up to us, and we remained to see the representation, as the master of the entertainment had allowed the princess to occupy his box. *Artaxerxes* was the opera. The celebrated Pacherotti played and sung the principal parts divinely; he was then twenty-five, and had a charming face. I never saw any thing so perfect as this performance; as many of the airs were *encored* it lasted till midnight. We were present at another representation of this admirable performance, at which there was delightfully performed a very fine ballet pantomime by Novère. The subject was Orpheus and Eurydice. We had seen several fine operas at the Duke of Modena's, but the execution was very inferior to that of Forli. In Italy we saw for the first time horses on

the stage, and priests and monks in the theatre at Rome, but the women's parts were played by that sort of singers who are victims of the cupidity of their parents and the rage for music. The divine beauty of these voices is incomparable; still it is inconceivable that, in a Christian country, the operation which produces them should be tolerated.

On our arrival in France, we passed by Lyons, where we stopped to see the manufactories. We went to Châlons, where we slept at the house of Madame de Rully's mother. We there saw an extraordinary thing; we dined at this house with an abbess of canonesses, (who had taken the vows,) who had been married, and had children. Being a widow, and having had the misfortune to kill a gamekeeper involuntarily in hunting, she had made herself a canoness. There was at the same dinner-party, a priest of the family of Tressan, who, in his youth had served in the army, and merited the cross of Saint Louis, which he wore; he had been married, and his two children were present at the dinner.

All our letters from Paris assured us that the princess would be exiled on her return, for having undertaken this journey without permission. I was so fond of Italy, that I should have been charmed to suffer a little persecution for its sake; but no exile

took place. We went immediately to court. The Duchess of Orleans was received very coldly, but all the royal displeasure was confined to this ; and in a very short time after nothing was said about our frolic. In the course of a month I had an inflammatory fever, caused by the little precaution I had used against the burning sun of Italy. I was bled, however, and soon recovered.

The cruize of the Duke of Chartres lasted two months, when he returned with the unanimous approbation of the public. The Duke of Chartres made another cruize, in which there was some fighting; he conducted himself with the greatest courage. On his return, the Duchess of Chartres went as far as Mortagne to meet him. I accompanied her, as did the Marchioness de Fleury, and this journey was in fact a triumph. No words can give an idea of the enthusiasm with which the prince was hailed on his road, and this lasted even on his arrival at Paris. The same feeling manifested itself at the theatres in a most passionate manner; but this triumph was speedily sullied by envy and calumny; and these brilliant days ended by sullying the whole of his future existence. At this lofty moment his soul was awakened—it unfolded itself to every generous and elevated sentiment; but the envy, the calumny, and the injustice of the world sickened, and wounded him

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deeply. He felt that glory required encouragement and happiness, and the want of these led him to disdain and renounce it. This fatal disappointment had the most melancholy influence on his disposition and his destiny! If the public had been just towards him he never would have stained a name and a renown so dear to France. Madame de Montesson in this affair behaved with great perfidy towards him; he could not help knowing it, but he forgave her most generously at the death of his father.

I return to my narrative, which I dropped at our return from Italy. The Duchess of Chartres was not with child, as I had supposed in Italy, but she became so immediately after the return of the Duke of Chartres. She had already two sons; the eldest was called the Duke of Valois. I had in vain represented to her that the name was unfortunate; my superstition did not prevent her from giving him that name. I suggested the pretty name of Nemours, but this was rejected. I trust that the misfortunes of the public have exhausted all his: he possesses all that can render a man solidly happy, in a virtuous family.

I forgot to mention an excursion we made to the waters of Forges. I shall here repair that omission, and at the same time relate a trait of

superstition, to which the most singular concurrence of circumstances gave all the appearance of a miracle. Two or three days before my departure for Forges, the Countess of Mérode, who was not yet a widow, and whose husband was in perfectly good health, wrote to me to beg that I would go and consult a celebrated conjuror at Paris relative to her destiny. This person, so celebrated at Brussels, (but of whose very existence we were ignorant at Paris,) was called *L'Eveillé*, and lived in the Fauxbourg Saint Marceau. As I have an equal contempt and aversion for conjurors, I was by no means tempted to fulfil this commission; but in order not to disoblige my friend I adopted a plan, which appeared to me a pleasant one. I wrote to her that I had been to the celebrated L'Eveillé, to present her horoscope, and that I forwarded her his reply, which was expressed in these words:—"The person who desires to know her destiny must cause a ring of lead to be made, which she will wear for three days on the little finger of the left hand; she will then put the said ring into a glass of clear water, which she will expose three nights to the moonlight, and at the end of that time she will have a prophetic dream, which will announce to her her future fate." I sent off this splendid performance, which looked

very oracular; and the whole was punctually executed. The next day after the ring was taken out of the water Madame de Mérode had a dream, in which she saw herself in deep mourning, in a large room hung with grey. As she looked upon the melancholy show, she suddenly saw a door open, and the Count de Lannoy appear, who came to throw himself at her feet to solicit her pardon; she had not spoken to him for two years!. . . .At this moment she awoke. The same day she wrote me an account of her dream, which I showed to five or six persons who had seen *my magical orders*. It is easy to conceive how the imagination, once raised, may have produced this dream; but what is most marvellous in the story is, that eight days after, M. de Mérode, who was then in perfect health, went to hunt, got heated, and while in that state drank cold water, which brought on a fluxion of the chest, of which he died the seventh day. When I afterwards saw Madame de Lannoy re-married, and talking to me in private with admiration of the miraculous prediction of L'Eveillé, I was strongly tempted to declare the truth to her; but I saw that it would evidently be useless to try to convince her of the fact. I have always reproached myself with this piece of pleasantry; my intention was to have opened her eyes to the folly

of superstition, and instead of this, I confirmed her in that very folly.

Our journey to Forges took place before the birth of M. de Valois. We there saw Madame de Damas, the mother of Madame de Simiane; she was no longer young; she was then thirty-seven or thirty-eight years of age, but she had preserved all the gaiety of her youth. As both of us were extremely frank, we conceived a strong friendship for each other, and this friendship lasted in all its force during our residence at Forges; but it ceased, without any quarrel, at Paris, and then only because our society was different. It was at Forges that I found the subject of my *Solitaires de Normandie,* which met with so much success both in the Veillées du Château and on the stage; for on that anecdote was founded a vaudeville, which was repeated a prodigious number of times. As we were riding through the forest in an open carriage, we saw a hut so low, that an infant five years old could scarcely stand upright in it; and to our great astonishment, we soon after saw a woman crawl out of it on her knees, followed by several little children. The Duchess of Chartres made the carriage stop, and questioned the woman, who told us that in the hut lay her husband, who was paralytic, and that this was their dwelling.

We asked why the hut was built so low? She replied that her husband, who was not then paralytic, had built it so, along with her, in order not to fatigue their arms by raising them higher, and because they never considered that it would be impossible to stand upright in it. All her answers were equally simple; they lived on wild fruits, brown bread, and potatoes, which they received from the abbey of Bolbec, near the spot, where the wife went for these things every Sunday. I crawled into the hut on my knees, where I saw the husband lying on a bed of leaves. The piety, patience, and goodnature of this couple equalled their simplicity; their children, who were almost naked, were handsome and healthy. The princess gave the woman a louis; she looked at it and said that she was not acquainted with that sort of money, and that she would rather have a sou. The Duchess of Chartres immediately promised to cause a house to be built for them, and charged me with the execution of that charitable action. I begged her to allow me to clothe, from my own purse, the woman and the children, whom I sent for to Forges; from that day they were clothed, fed, and lodged at our expense, and I placed the husband in the hands of the physician of the place. In the mean time their house was built; when it was finished

all the workmen unanimously refused any kind of payment, not one of them would take a farthing; this action of theirs is above all praise. This took place eighteen years before the revolution. We furnished the house and planted the garden beautifully; we gave them eight fowls, a goat, and a sheep, and we saw them lodged in their new habitation the evening before our departure. What pleased the woman most was to find in a cupboard all kinds of house linen, and an enormous provision of lint for spinning. Up to the revolution these honest people sent every year a sheep to their benefactress.

I now resume my narrative. I recommenced my little performances with the same success as ever; my children played again in the old pieces, and in one or two new ones.

An adventure which made a great noise happened to me about the same time. One evening Mademoiselle Victoire, my servant, who had a great deal of courage, came to me in great emotion, and told me that a tall gentleman, about fifty-six years old, decorated with the cross of St. Louis, begged me to allow him an audience of five minutes; that she had refused, and upon this he had confessed to her that he would be arrested and put in prison if he did not find an asylum for a

few days in the Palais Royal. This story seemed to me strange, yet it touched me, and I determined on seeing this unknown person in the presence of my maid. This gentleman turned out to be the Chevalier de Queissat, the eldest of the brothers: he entered, and his noble aspect touched me deeply: he related to me in a few words his unfortunate affair with Damade, a merchant of Bordeaux. It must be allowed that the military in the country towns were at this period excessively insolent towards the merchants, which was not the case under the military and victorious government which we have seen; the reason of this was that all the military were, or pretended to be, *gentlemen by birth*, and affected the utmost contempt for the low birth of the merchants, who, on their side, proud of their riches, displayed great disdain for the poverty of the country gentlemen and soldiers who had no fortune; but in other respects these gentlemen were obliging and affable to the lower orders in the towns where they were garrisoned, and were in general much loved and esteemed. Besides, in the affair of Messieurs de Queissat, which every body knows, (it having been publicly heard before the parliament,) the Chevalier de Queissat the elder, whom I have mentioned, was not at all to blame, and yet, by a crying piece

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of injustice, he was condemned along with his brothers. The following is the case, in a few words. Monsieur Damade, a merchant, was passing through the street in which the Messieurs de Queissat lived; two of the brothers were standing at the door. M. Damade, who had long hated them, said something very abusive as he passed, and a long dispute ensued. One of the brothers ran into the house, fetched a pistol, fired at M. Damade, and broke his arm: this unworthy action is inexcusable, but it was but the crime of one. The people assembled in crowds, and the Chevalier de Queissat, who had not yet appeared, hearing a noise, came out, made his brothers go into the house, and shut the door. This is all the share he had in this disturbance, as every body allows; besides he had served as a soldier with the highest honour to himself, and had even performed several distinguished actions; his conduct was irreproachable, and he was generally esteemed. I could only offer him the half of one of my servants' rooms, where he lay concealed two days and two nights; he then went out in the night to conceal himself in the house of a friend, where he remained till sentence was passed. He had chosen for an advocate the honourable and virtuous Gerbier, who came to my house to relate the whole

affair to me; he wrote out a memorial, which he read to me as it was finished. I charged myself with soliciting the judges, which I did with all possible zeal; but as soon as the procedure was commenced, the three brothers were imprisoned at Fort l'Evêque, and obliged to remain there until the decision of the process.

I went to visit them from time to time in prison, and to carry them pastry and sweetmeats; all my interest was directed towards the eldest, who deserved it in every respect. In one of these visits I met in the prison with Messieurs de Queissat, a young man afterwards justly celebrated—M. de Garat. As he belonged to the same part of the country, and knew the family personally, he took a lively interest in their fate; and he paid me many compliments on what I did for them. His face was mild and intelligent, and left on my memory an agreeable impression of his person and conversation; and a short time afterwards I read with singular pleasure his first *éloge*, which was I think that of the *Chancellor de l' Hôpital.* This discourse met with great applause, and deserved it.

Messieurs de Queissat, while in prison, paid me so graceful a piece of attention, that I cannot omit the mention of it: they learned, I do not know how, that my Christian name was Felicité; and

they conceived the singular idea of learning to make flowers on purpose to present me a bouquet. In fact, two months after, the tenth of July, they gave me a large and superb bouquet, which I was much affected at receiving, when I reflected that the hands of warriors had not disdained to be employed so many hours in so frivolous a work.

After much time was past, and many solicitations employed, Messieurs de Queissat were sentenced, all the three, to pay in the shape of damages to M. Damade, the sum of seventy-five thousand francs, or to remain in prison for the rest of their lives. As neither of them possessed any thing but a very small property, of which three-quarters were consumed, and as they would have been unable to make up among them all even ten thousand francs, perpetual imprisonment seemed inevitable. We appealed to the council. Gerbier, who was very unwell, and much fatigued at this moment, made me write almost the whole of the memorial, with which he was so much pleased, that he said I understood the affair as well as an advocate. Nevertheless, in spite of my *eloquent* memorial, the decision of the parliament was confirmed by the council, and consequently the cause was lost without farther appeal. My distress was extreme, for I had become sincerely attached to the Chevalier de

Queissat. I had received a few days previous a letter, in the name of the town of Castillon, where the chevalier was born. This letter, which was signed by more than two hundred persons, thanked me in the most honourable terms for the lively interest in the Chevalier de Queissat, of which I had given so many proofs for the last five months. Gerbier, who had the most generous heart in the world, was in the deepest affliction; he suddenly conceived an idea, which he instantly communicated to me. He had been present at several representations of my little pieces, and had been charmed by them; and he proposed to me to print these pieces, announcing in the newspapers that the profits were for the benefit of Messieurs de Queissat, and to form part of the sum they had been condemned to pay. For this purpose I had to ask the permission of M. de Genlis, which he gave me; he even undertook the editorship of the work, which was printed by M. Panckoucke. All the pieces I had written up to this time, when collected, formed a large volume in octavo. A great number of impressions were taken off; and though I did not give away a single copy, the whole were sold in five or six days. The money was deposited as it was received with the notary of M. Gerbier. The royal family honoured the publication of the

work with a munificence which it has always exemplified in the ease of all actions which had a benevolent tendency.

The Duke and Duchess of Chartres gave a hundred louis for two copies, and the Prince of Condé gave fifty louis for his; the Baron de Vioménil paid three hundred francs for his copy. No officer paid merely the regular price. I cannot overlook a Russian, called the Count de Jardini, with whom I was quite unacquainted, but who came to see me on this subject, and paid me three thousand francs for a copy. After having thanked him with all my heart, I sent him to M. Gerbier's notary, to whom he immediately paid that sum. In short, after all expenses were paid, which by the way amounted to eleven thousand francs, the clear profits were forty-six thousand. Upon this M. Gerbier negociated with M. Damade, who consented to receive that sum, and gave an agreement to that effect, which restored to the Messieurs de Queissat their liberty. All this affair, the process, the judgment, the appeal, and the printing of my work, together with the arrangement with M. Damade, lasted more than eighteen months.

During this time, the following is a narrative of what passed at the Palais Royal, and the changes which took place in my situation. The

Duchess of Chartres was brought to bed of female twins. It had long been agreed on between us, that if she had a daughter, I should be her governess, and that instead of undertaking the charge of her at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I should educate her from the cradle. Up to this period, the princesses of the blood had been educated in their infancy only by an under-governess. I did not wish to lose a time so precious in the education of a child, for first impressions form the basis of all the good that can be done in the end. I was also determined not to bring up the princess at the Palais Royal, but to place myself in a convent along with her. This sacrifice was a great one at my age. I was so much attached to the Duke and Duchess of Chartres; I was so much disgusted with the world, that is to say, with the Palais Royal, where I had experienced so much injustice, ingratitude, and wickedness, and I had so great a taste for the culture of the arts and sciences, that this resolution cost me nothing. All these projects were secrets between the Duchess of Chartres and myself. Our separation occasioned her much pain, but she felt all the advantages of it. She determined to come and pass with me a part of every day. She was very desirous of having a daughter, and she confessed to me that

she had prayed for one in all the churches in Italy; so that her joy was extreme when she was confined with these two little princesses. I was very uneasy about them for the first few days of their existence, as they were very weakly. There was a singular appearance about them: they were both born with the feet black, as if bruised, and smelling very ill; this lasted several days, but by degrees this appearance of putrefaction wore off. They were intrusted to the care of Madame de Rochambeau, and they remained at the Palais Royal till the time when I was to take charge of them, without its being known publicly that I was to do so. During this time the pavilion of Belle Chasse was building. I fulfilled my duties as usual, and received company at my apartments every Saturday. Once a fortnight I had a concert, to which several amateurs came to play or sing; amongst others M. d'Adhémar. He was much in fashion, and in high favour at court. He had passed all his early youth in the country, where he had met with great success in society, which had given him an air of provincial coxcombry, of which he never could divest himself. He had an agreeable face, with a great confidence in his wit, which was very middling; and in his talents, which were all very ordinary. I have never been able to conceive how

he came to succeed at court. He sung, accompanying himself on the harp. The Marchioness of Bethizy and her husband came also to my concerts. Madame de Bethizy had a fine voice; M. de Bethizy was amiable, witty, and gay, and danced perfectly well. This husband and wife, who were both endowed with every social quality, lived together in a union which was cited as a model. I also saw frequently the Princess of Craon, whose frankness and natural manners particularly pleased me. I still saw very frequently my old friends, Mesdames d'Harville and de Jumilhac, the Marchioness of Fleury and my cousins, or rather those of M. de Genlis, Mesdames de Crussol and de Faudoas. The Count de Custines, M. de Monville, the Chevalier de Chastellux and the Count d'Albaret, M. Donnézan, the Chevaliers de Durfort and de Boufflеurs, the Viscount de la Tour du Pin, and the Count de Schomberg, came constantly to my house. I have never had any thing to complain of in any of these persons, except in Mesdames de Jumilhac and de Craon, who since the Revolution, without either pretext or reason, have ceased to visit me. When I published my first volume of the *Théatre d'Education*,—that volume which gave liberty to Messieurs de Queis-

sat, there was every where felt for me a sort of general enthusiasm. Letters and verses multiplied upon me. An infinite number of persons sought my acquaintance, and among others M. de la Harpe. All the journalists without exception praised my work excessively, and without any mixture of severity. The work was immediately translated into all the European languages. The Empress of Russia had a version of it made with the Russian text opposite the French. Yet I had never offered the book to her; nor have I ever presented my works to princes, unless they have thought proper to demand them. The Electress of Saxony did me the honour to write to *demand my friendship*—these were her very words. Her letter was signed *your friend Amelia.* When I went to pay my court at Versailles, the queen and all the princesses said obliging things to me on my work. In short, no one ever entered on a literary career with more glory and honour. At this brilliant period I went to Saint Cloud, where my aunt and the Duke of Orleans then were, and was very ill received. My aunt, in spite of her natural dissimulation, could not conceal her vexation; she pretended to talk to me of my *success*, but it was in a tone of irony and spite which was visible to every

one. The Chevalier de Chastellux, who was present on this occasion, was indignant at the exhibition.

I now went daily to pass an hour in the apartment of the little princesses, whom I already loved passionately. I cultivated my understanding, my memory, and my talents, with new ardour, when I reflected that all these things would be useful to them as well as to my own daughters. At last the moment came that I was to separate myself from the world and enter into a convent; I was then thirty-one, (1777,) my health was excellent, and with the face I possessed I might easily have given myself a few years less. For a year back I had not worn rouge; it is singular that though I had always possessed religious sentiments, all the sacrifices *of a devotee* which I have made have not been inspired by religion, and this is a reflection which afflicts me. The following is the manner in which I left off wearing rouge at thirty years of age. When at Villers Coterets in my youth, at the age of twenty-one or twenty-two, the conversation turned upon old women who wore rouge, and they were ridiculed; I said I could not conceive how the giving up of rouge was a sacrifice, and every one appeared to think I did not mean what I said; I was piqued, and said that as for

me, I was determined to leave off rouge at thirty. Every one exclaimed at this, and especially the Duke of Chartres; when I offered to bet a *discretion** that I should renounce rouge on the 25th of January 1776, and I kept my word. This singular wager was not forgotten, because it was spoken of several times in the space of ten years. A fortnight before I attained my thirtieth year I told the Duke of Chartres that I begged him to remember my *discretion*, and on the 25th of January I found in my cabinet a doll as large as life, sitting at my desk, with a pen in its hand, and a head-dress of millions of quills; on one side of my desk was a ream of superb writing paper, and on the other thirty-two blank octavo books, bound in green morocco, and twenty-four very small ones in red; at the feet of the doll lay a portfolio filled with note papers, cover of letters, sealing wax, gold and silver powder, a penknife, scissors, rule, compass, &c. &c. This present delighted me; I have never worn rouge since.

I must here do honour to the beneficence of the Baron de Vioménil; he interested himself deeply for the Chevalier de Queissat, and as on leaving

* A *discretion* is a bet in which neither party names the kind of thing he wagers, nor the amount of the bet. (*Translator.*)

prison he and his brothers were unemployed, he placed them according to their rank in his regiment, which was in Corsica, and gave twelve thousand francs to defray their journey and equip ment; and he had the kindness to charge me with announcing this news to them when I went to deliver them from prison. But I made M. Gerbier a partner in my pleasure, as in all the affair he had a great deal more to do than I, who merely consented to the printing of the volume; and when after all expenses were paid, the collection produced forty-seven thousand francs, I wished from that sum to pay M. Gerbier his fees, or at least the money he had paid out of his own pocket; but all this he refused with a generosity which was very uncommon. He may thus be regarded as the chief benefactor of Messieurs de Queissat.

The evening before I was to go to Belle Chasse, I supped at the Palais Royal; it was one of the private days. Madame de Barbantane was present, and my entrance into the convent was mentioned, when Madame de Barbantane observed that I ought to expect to experience a very deep emotion, when the grate closed upon me, and that she had experienced a like feeling at Panthemont. The Duchess of Bourbon was fifteen when she took charge of her, consequently she had only three or

four years to remain in the convent. I was much offended by the comparison, and replied that she really frightened me, for that if the impression was proportioned to the sacrifice, I should certainly faint, my princess being only eleven months old.

At last, on the very day of my entrance to Belle Chasse, I had the inexpressible pleasure of going with Gerbier to take the Messieurs de Queissat from prison, and to announce to them, at the same time, all that M. de Vioménil had done for them. I have never seen any thing so noble and touching as the gratitude of the chevalier, and the happiness of all three. They had a fourth brother, who had not interfered in this unfortunate affair, and whom I had seen very often, to charge him with commissions for them; he was present at this scene. I conducted them all to Gerbier's, from whence they went to thank the Baron de Vioménil, and I invited all the four, as well as Gerbier, to dine at Belle Chasse the same day.

I entered Belle Chasse at noon. The charming pavilion, built in the middle of the garden, was on my own plan; it communicated with the convent by a long arbour covered with wax cloth, and loaded with vines. All the house, conducted by the prioress, came to receive my little princesses at the grand gate of the convent; we conducted them

to the church, from whence we went to fix ourselves in our charming pavilion. I experienced nothing of the emotion of which Madame de Barbantane had spoken; I felt nothing but joy at entering this peaceful abode where I was to exercise an empire so sweet; I thought that there I might give myself up to my real tastes, and that I should be no longer a mark for the malignity which had caused me so many griefs! I was not very much at ease for the first few days, because curiosity attracted all the persons belonging to the Palais Royal to Belle Chasse, as well as my own acquaintance. Every one was enchanted with my establishment, which was really charming. I had in my bed-room a large alcove, of which my bed occupied only the half; there was in it a passage which led into the room of the princesses, which was beside mine, and from which I was only separated by a glass door, without either staining or curtain, so that I could see from my bed all that passed in their room. One of the rooms held, in glass cases, all my cabinet of natural history; I had brought nothing from the Palais Royal but that and my writing desk. I was the first lady who had such a desk; it was very much remarked on at first, but afterwards every lady had one. M. de Genlis, who gave it me, had

placed it in my cabinet, under a large looking glass; and my brother composed on the occasion some pretty verses, which he wrote out and had framed, and hung them up under the glass.

My apartments at the Palais Royal were still kept for me, because they were destined for my eldest daughter, to whom a place had been promised on her marriage; they were magnificently furnished, carpeted with blue damask, and beautifully striped with gilt streaks; they contained more than eighteen thousand francs worth of mirrors; I removed nothing of this. My furniture at Belle Chasse was extremely simple, because, according to the custom of the house, the furniture, when the education of the child was finished, belonged to the governess. The salary of the governess was six thousand francs; but as I took the princesses when very young, the Duke of Chartres offered me twelve thousand. I refused this, and contented myself with six thousand, not wishing to give any one an opportunity of charging me with having taken the princesses so young from motives of interest. The Duke of Chartres has been often charged with being niggardly, but unjustly; I have twice seen him pay, without grumbling, the debts of the Duchess of Chartres; and he gave her money most liberally for her

journeys to Holland and Italy, and for the education of her children. I have seen him do many generous private actions; I shall mention only three instances of this kind, though I could cite several others. The Chevalier de Barbantane, with whom he was not at all acquainted, was attached in Germany to the Duke of Deux Ponts; when this prince died the chevalier found himself without either fortune or place; the Duke of Chartres saw that I was afflicted at his situation, and of his own accord, without any solicitation on my part, he desired me to write to him to beg that he would receive from him a pension of four thousand francs; the chevalier had the delicacy to refuse this offer, as having no title to it; but as such delicacy was far from common, the Duke of Chartres certainly did not expect a refusal. I was at the Palais Royal when the Duke of Chartres had the misfortune to wound, in hunting, one of his running footmen, and without any fault of his own. The man was stooping down in a ditch, which the duke was not aware of; a partridge rose from this ditch, and the Duke of Chartres fired at the very moment when the man got up; he received the wound in his head, and though the gun was only charged with small shot, he was grievously wounded. The Duke of

Chartres in despair took him in his arms, bore him to his carriage, and carried him to one of the best surgeons in Paris; the man was cured, and even resumed his occupation, but his health was evidently ruined, and he died in eight months. The Duke of Chartres gave his widow a pension for life of fifteen hundred francs, with a reversion to her only daughter, who was twelve or thirteen years of age; but as the woman's conduct turned out very bad, he took the girl, who was very pretty, out of her hands, placed her in a convent, and paid her board, over and above the fifteen hundred francs. She remained five years at the convent; after this the Duke of Chartres gave her away in marriage, with an outfit and a dowry in ready money.

One day at the Palais Royal, the Duke of Chartres desired I would find him a good gardener for Mousseaux, who might be willing to marry a young dairy-maid. I thought instantly of Rose, the daughter of the dairy-maid of Genlis. I calculated that she must be then about eighteen; I wrote to her mother, Madame Foret, who told me that she was not married. I sent for her, brought her to Paris and placed her under Madame Adam, the most famous dairy maid there; she learnt while with her to make excellent cream cheese,

and all that belonged to her business; she remained three months with her. In the mean time I was looking out for a gardener, and found one who was very celebrated in his art; he was a German, and his name was Etickausen. Rose was pretty and perfectly virtuous, and my gardener immediately became enamoured of her; I gave her an outfit, married her to the gardener, and led her myself into church. Afterwards I had the pleasure of carrying her to Mousseaux, to a pretty little house which the Duke of Chartres had caused to be built for them in the form of an elegant dairy, completely furnished, with presses full of household linen, dishes, pans, &c. and twelve silver forks and spoons. The Duke of Chartres, on my account, gave them three thousand francs a year of wages; and Etickausen, to complete the happiness of his wife, bethought himself of a charming scheme: he made Rose's mother be brought from Genlis unknown to her, so that she found her in her house without expecting such a pleasure. I alone was in the confidence of Etickausen, who, in order to procure Rose so agreeable a surprise, did not wish the mother to be present at the marriage. He always kept this honest woman in his house, paid her all possible attention, and never parted from her but when I afterwards requested

her to come and be our dairy-maid at Saint Leu. I never passed a more agreeable morning than this in my life.

I conducted the mansion of Belle Chasse, and the education of the princesses, and the princes their brothers, with an economy so remarkable as to have been often cited. My first principle was to have an eye to every thing; to settle the accounts daily, and to know the prices of the articles, and especially the *quantities* of eatables given out every day to the cook for the various repasts. The quantities never vary; and it is in this respect that people are generally cheated, and that you are plundered when you do not pay attention to it. I therefore learnt how much vermicelli or rice was required for soup for four, eight, twelve persons, &c.; and for this it is sufficient to know what is requisite for one or two. I had made the same calculation with regard to sugar for the jellies, creams, &c. for the oil, the butter, the milk, &c. I sent secretly to the market once a week a man of whom I well knew the scrupulous and delicate honesty; he learnt the current price of all the articles, and brought me the details in writing. To save himself however from the redoubtable enmity of the cooks, he made me promise the most profound secrecy, which I so faithfully kept, that no one ever

suspected our correspondence in this way. This man, whose name was Horain, was a valet of Mademoiselle. I think it right to name him, because it is to him I owe, in a very great measure, the economy which has been so much praised at Belle Chasse, and my reputation of a *good housewife*—a kind o praise so reluctantly accorded to those women who love reading, and cultivate literature and the arts.

I enter into this minute detail, first, because it occupies so small a place in these memoirs ; and second, because it is my duty to omit nothing of the kind ; and as I was entrusted with the household expences, probity alone (if no higher motive) obliged me to neglect no means that might be found of conducting the establishment properly. I never charged myself with the payment of the money, a steward paid the bills when signed by me ; this was another rule I established. We read with pleasure in the letters and memoirs of Madame de Maintenon, *the household maxims* which she is constantly giving to her brother and young sister-in-law, telling them what they ought to have put on their table, instructing them in the prices of various articles, &c. This attention to little things, is pleasing in a person who lived in the very highest circles ; and in whom it was not a duty.

I therefore hope I shall be excused for this little digression. My second principle was to teach my pupils to entertain magnificently on all occasions, but to pay only as private persons did; and my third, not to take any articles for my own use from any of their merchants or purveyors. The Duke of Chartres was pleased with my system of economy, but he did not insist upon the practice of it; and when I proposed to him, for the advantage of my pupils, any unusual expenses, he always acceded to them not merely without opposition, but heartily and with pleasure: as for example, the purchase of all instructive games, such as palaces of architecture, which could be taken to pieces, and which cost so dear, with many other things of the same kind. He even made the purchase of the fine estate of Saint Leu, and that of the chateau of La Motte, merely to instruct his children relative to the sea, the roads, various parts of France, &c. I tried to render every thing useful to my plan of education, even to the furniture of Belle Chasse. The tapestry of the princesses' room was painted in oil, and on a blue ground were represented in rough sketches, from medals, busts of the seven kings of Rome and the emperors and empresses down to Constantine the Great. Over the doors were painted particular scenes from

the same history, and over the medallions were the dates and the names of the personages represented. Two large fire-screens represented the kings of France; the hand-screens, &c. and the tops of the dining-room doors were all covered with mythological pictures. The staircase was entirely covered with maps, which could be taken down for the lessons; the maps of the south were at the foot of the stair, and those of the north at the top. I have detailed all these things in *Adèle and Theodore;* I also had engraved in letters of gold, over the grate which closed us in, these words of Addison, taken from the Spectator: "*True happiness is of a retired nature and an enemy to pomp and noise.*"

Monsieur de Schomberg came often to see me, and brought with him D'Alembert, to whom I had naturally a dislike. His vulgar expression of face, and his shrill and sharp voice were disagreeable to me. In conversation he was bitter, full of buffoonery, burlesque, and caustic; and I only received his visits through complaisance to M. de Schomberg.

I published successively, during the first eighteen months of my residence at Belle Chasse, the other volumes of my *Theatre of Education*, of which all the journals spoke in the same terms of eulogy.

In speaking of some of the pieces taken from the sacred writings, D'Alembert, in the presence of M. de Schomberg, told me, *by way of friendship*, that he advised me not to talk about religion now, for that *it was quite out of fashion*; that I ought to employ *my fine imagination* upon subjects *entirely moral* (I was then engaged upon *Adèle and Theodore*) and that I should be sure in that case to have the most brilliant success; that he, for example, would propose to the academy to create four female members, in order to put me at their head; and that he was sure of obtaining that favour, which would cover me with glory, for the public would easily guess that the other three would not have been named, had it not been for the sake of having the right of electing me, and diminishing, in some degree, the envy which such a choice would occasion. I enquired who were to be my three comrades. He mentioned the names of Mesdames de Montesson, d'Angevilliers, and d'Houdetot. I replied, that it was impossible for me to separate religion from morality, and that I should have no kind of talent left me, if I removed such a basis of it; that not only I should continue to speak of religion, but that I would combat with all my feeble means, that false philosophy which attacks and calumniates it. He

replied with anger and scorn that I would repent of it; and added in a tone of great bitterness and irony, that *grace* might be on my side, but that *strength* was not. I replied, that we were always strong when we had reason, conscience, and perseverance on our side. The dispute became warm on both sides, in spite of all the efforts of M. de Schomberg to soften and conciliate us. D'Alembert departed in a rage with me; and from that time I never saw him again. Such was the commencement of my disputes with the philosophers.

I forgot to say, that among the numberless letters of compliments I received at the Palais Royal, on the appearance of the first volume of the *Theatre of Education,* I had one from Madame d'Epinay, with whom I was not at all acquainted. She was then a woman of fifty, very infirm, and remained constantly at home; she earnestly begged me to go and see her. Her letter was prettily written, and I determined to pay her a visit; and she received me so well, that I promised to return. M. Grimm resided in her house, and he made always a third person in our conversations, I had already seen him at Venice, and without esteeming him amiable, I was pleased with his conversation, for he had travelled a great deal, and replied readily to all my enquiries. Madame

d'Epinay could never have been pretty, and her manners were entirely destitute of elegance; there was a good deal of gossip in her conversation, but she was frank and obliging, and without pedantry; her understanding seemed to me very ordinary, and her reading very limited.* I met Madame d'Houdetot, her sister-in-law, at her house, who was a much cleverer person; I regarded her with some curiosity, because I had read in the *Confessions* of J. J. Rousseau, that he had been passionately enamoured of her; yet she squinted extremely, and her features were not handsome. She made me many advances, and gave me many invitations to visit her; she called on me, and I returned her visit at the hour when I knew I should find all her assemblage of *beaux esprits* collected in her drawing-room. I there saw for the first time M. de

* I should have judged her still more unfavourably had I then known the existence of the memoirs which have been since published under her name. I suppose the author, who was quite unprincipled, made no scruple of disguising or altering all the facts; she had some reason to complain of Duclos and Rousseau; but I am convinced she greatly exaggerated their differences with her.

We must not judge of the morals of her time by the hideous picture of them which she exhibits; Madame d'Epinay only describes a very limited circle, composed of the worst society—for her behaviour in her youth prevented her from being received into good company.—*(Note by the Author.)*

Saint Lambert; and I remained an hour and a half perfectly silent and only occupied in listening. The conversation wanted ease, for every one was occupied only with a desire to shine. It was the second *bureau d'esprit*, which I had seen, and I did not find it any more amusing than that of Madame Geoffrin: at Belle Chasse I saw a third which pleased me more. Madame du Deffant was a relative of Messieurs de Genlis; but as she had practised in her youth and in her riper years, a conduct extremely *philosophical,* Madame de Puisieux had forbidden me to visit her; this was on her part but rancour arising from forgotten scandal, which the eighty-four years of the former ought to have removed. Madame du Deffant wrote me the prettiest possible notes to request me to visit her; and at last I obtained Madame de Puisieux's permission to do so.

I had not the slightest desire to be acquainted with Madame du Deffant. I thought I should find her stiff, affected, and pedantic; and I dreaded the thought of finding myself in a circle of philosophers. I imagined, that being in such force they would speak and dissert in the emphatic tone which they assume in their writings, and I felt that I should make a strange figure in that assembly, over which a sibyl presided, who was an en-

thusiast about all such declamations, and whom it was impossible openly to contradict, doubly protected as she was by old age and misfortune. At last, I took the courageous resolution of visiting her, and the same evening I went to the house of Madame du Deffant at Saint Joseph. There was a considerable number of persons with her, among whom I was glad to recognise several of my own acquaintance. Madame du Deffant received me with open arms, and I was agreeably surprised to find in her a great deal of frankness and an air of great good nature. She was a little woman, pale, thin, and sallow, who could never have been handsome, because her head was too big, and her features too large for her person. Yet she did not appear so old as she really was. When she was not animated by conversation, an expression of melancholy and sadness was visible on her face; at the same time, there appeared on her physiognomy, and in all her person a kind of immobility which was very striking. When she was pleased with any one, she was very kind, even affectionate in her manner of receiving him. Those persons who are incapable of loving, cannot see the infinite difference which exists between good will and friendship; a taste is to them an attachment, and they fancy they love, when they only desire

to please those who amuse them in return. This error, which degrades some in their youth, gives them in advanced years all the appearances of falsehood and affectation. It is true, that such demonstrations of tenderness mean nothing of what they seem to express, but they are almost always lavished upon you all with the appearance of sincerity.

At Madame du Deffant's no one spoke of philosophy nor even of literature; the company was composed of persons of different pursuits; the *beaux esprits* were but a small number, and those who go into society are generally agreeable when they do not rule their circle. Madame du Deffant conversed agreeably, and (very differently from the idea I had formed of her) she made no pretensions to great talents, it would have been impossible to be less decided in tone. As she had thought but little, she was entirely governed by habit; but she had followed a system (without having any system) in her youth, which is said to have been *very philosophical.* The world was then so little enlightened that Madame du Deffant was for a long time, if not banished from society, at least treated with a coldness which ought to have induced her to exile herself from it. Thirty years after, when light began to dawn on the world, Madame du Deffant thought that she could justify her former

conduct by adopting the principles which led to it. Her philosophy saved her the humiliation of blushing for the past; it was agreeable to be able to look back, not only without shame and without regret, but with satisfaction and a sort of exultation; and, instead of confessing that she had behaved with great imprudence and levity to be able to boast of having been by lucky anticipation the disciple of philosophers yet to be; and it was a fine thing to have it in her power to say to all the great and celebrated moralists of the day,—What you now preach I have practised before you unfolded your plan to the universe!

As Madame du Deffant had never in the whole course of her life, *thought*, she had in point of fact no opinions; she was not even an infidel. To doubt, to hesitate, it is necessary to have at least superficially compared, and to have in some measure examined; but this was a kind of trouble she had never given herself. She described herself admirably, when she said that she suffered her mind to float in the void. This is a melancholy situation at any age, but far more so at eighty! .... This indolence of mind, and this recklessness gave her in conversation all the graces of mildness. She never disputed; and she was so little wedded to the sentiment she put forth, that she seemed to

support it merely in a fit of absence. It was almost impossible to contradict her: she either did not listen, or appeared to yield, and then hastened to change the subject. She made me promise to return to see her at the hour when she was always alone and finishing her toilette after getting up, that is to say, at three or four in the afternoon; for she had been long unable to sleep at nights. Some one read to her all night, and she did not close her eyes till day-break. I returned to her house two days after, and found her in her arm-chair, with a valet-de-chambre seated beside her, who was reading a romance aloud to her. The book wearied her, and she appeared to be glad of my visit; I remained two or three hours with her, listening to her almost constantly. She spoke to me of old times, of the court, of the Duchess of Maine, of Chaulien, of the Marquis de la Fare, of the ingenious Lamothe, and of Madame de Stael, whose vivacity I so much admire, and promised some other time to shew me several little manuscripts, and many letters from the Empress of Russia. Madame du Deffant, by means of a small and very simple machine, wrote extremely well, and contrived to do without a secretary; her handwriting was heavy but very legible. The following days, she made her valet-de-chambre read to me se-

veral little pieces of her composition, chiefly allegories and portraits, in the taste of the last century among the clever persons who mingled in society. These portraits being all done with the intention of pleasing and flattering, were sufficiently insipid; the prettiest Madame du Deffant made, is that of Madame de Mirepoix, which has also been executed in a very agreeable manner, but in verse by the President Hénault. I felt much more curiosity to read the empress's letters, but they only contained allusions and pleasantries of society, the greater part referring to M. Grimm. In order to make me understand them, Madame du Deffant was obliged to stop the reader every moment, to explain the things the empress referred to. These letters were quite surprising, from their length and their extreme frivolity; it would be curious to contrast them with those which the same empress wrote to M. de Buffon, which display so much intellect and such extensive knowledge.

I had been told that Madame du Deffant was malignant—a thing, which I have never observed in her; she was not even given to scandal. There was in her character so much weakness, thoughtlessness and levity, that no lively sentiment could agitate her long; she was as incapable of hating as of loving. She had quarrelled with D'Alem-

bert, but when talking to me of her disputes with him, she alluded to them without any bitterness or resentment; it was a simple narrative, and not a complaint. Her heart had grown old, *philosophy* had altogether withered it, but her understanding had not ripened; that was younger than it ought to have been at the age of twenty-five. She had all her life feared to reflect: this fear which had grown into terror, gave her a decided aversion to every thing that was solid; she was overwhelmed with vapours, and an invincible melancholy, and she mortally dreaded all serious conversation; she even repulsed with coldness any attempt to introduce it, and in order to please her you could speak only on trifles. All that looked like seriousness, she dreaded; and it was an extraordinary thing to see a person of that age, infirm, suffering, and melancholy, exacting from others an eternal gaiety, which she seemed never to partake. The loss of her eye-sight did not at all affect her; she told me she was better pleased to be blind than to be afflicted with a painful rheumatism. When she lost her sight, it was without any violent chagrin, for she entertained for five years the hope of recovering it; and when she had consulted all the quacks in town, and vainly employed all their remedies, she easily made up her mind to her con-

dition, and seemed to bear it with perfect resignation. It was not this which afflicted her; but she drove away all the painful ideas of the future, which age and sufferings bring in their train. One day I ventured to talk to her of the religious death of the President Hénault. She interrupted me in an ironical tone, and said with a forced smile,—" Is that a sermon you are preparing for me?" I began to laugh, assuring her that I loved much better to listen to her than to preach. Though she had no religion she was not an infidel, and in spite of all the strength of long habit, she was not a *philosopher*. Her kind of life, like that of many others, sprung from her acquaintances; it is easy to imagine, that if she had lived with religious persons, she would have been a saint; and her last days, which were consumed by ennui, and poisoned by fears, would have glided away in gentle and peaceful serenity.

M. de la Harpe, who had visited me during the latter part of my residence at the Palais Royal, came also assiduously to Belle Chasse. His air was full of pride, and his manner of pedantry, but I never found either of these defects in his conversation. When he was at his ease, he was even gay, and ridiculed all affectation in an agreeable manner. He became so passionately attached to

me that I was obliged seriously to restrain his enthusiasm. The same thing had happened to me with M. de Sauvigny; after fourteen years of acquaintance and friendship, I was forced to break with him irrevocably, eighteen months before quitting the Palais Royal. Matters did not go quite so far with M. de la Harpe; I was much less surprised at his declaration, because I knew the extent of his conceit and his pretensions. The affair turned out in a romantic manner, and in the *grand style.* M. de la Harpe wrote to me that he was about to make a journey to cure himself, as he said, *of an unhappy passion.* He went to Lyons, where he had apparently some business; from thence he wrote me several sentimental letters, as well as some charming verses on melancholy, which, he said, admirably described the state of his affections and his heart. These verses commenced thus:

"Mes maux et mes plaisirs ne sont connus que d'elle."

But as there was always some coxcombry in all that he did, these verses ended by a thought which expressed a *hope;* upon this I replied that I hoped that the desire which turned

"Vers un bonheur lointain qui toujours semble fuir,"

SARASWATI MAHAL SERFOJI'S

only referred to friendship. He returned from Lyons pretty reasonable, and our acquaintance subsisted up to the publication of *Adèle and Theodore.* He continued to write me pretty verses. The most agreeable of them are the lines which he addressed to me on sending me a small edition of the *Maxims* of Rochefoucault, and some others on two little pictures which I had painted, representing *Abeone and Adeone,* the goddesses who presided over the departure and return of travellers.

ON THE DEPARTURE.

Ah! dans un long adieu dont la douleur s'irrite,
Le cœur s'échappe en vain vers l'objet que l'on quitte;
On s'éloigne à pas lents, les bras en vain tendus,
Et l'œil le suit encor quand on ne le voit plus.

ON THE RETURN.

O bonheur, il revient! le retour a des ailes!
Quel plaisir de conter les souvenirs fidèles!
Que de pleurs! ce moment va donc les essuyer!
Que d'ennuis! ce moment les fait tous oublier!

He also wrote some charming lines for two other figures (Truth and Virtue) drawn by my daughters. These lines ended thus.

Et cette double image, à tous les cœurs si chère,
N'est parfaite qu'en vos écrits.

I have quoted these pretty lines in several of my writings.

M. de la Harpe wrote also at Bercey some agreeable verses for my birth-day. M. de Genlis had given my mother my bust in marble, and M. de la Harpe praised extremely the verses of M. de Sauvigny which were inscribed beneath the bust. M. de la Harpe added this inscription :—

" She possesses all the charm of small things, and all the sublimity of great ones."

I only refer to these details here, because it is curious to see how easily people pass from such an excess of exaggerated admiration and eulogy to an excess of detraction.

I saw moreover at Belle Chasse, in the beginning of my stay there, two men of letters whom I sincerely esteemed, and of whom I have never had to complain. These were M. Gaillard, the justly celebrated historian, and the Abbé de Vauxelles :* the latter is well known by several elegantly written discourses, and by an agreeable *eloge* of Madame de Sévigné ; he had the manners of a gentleman, the purest sentiments, and was very agreeable in conversation. On my return to France I found him the same as he had always

* Preacher to the King.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

been to me; but I had the misfortune to lose him two years afterwards. M. Gaillard was established at Chantilly when I returned from my exile. I learned with joy that he was sincerely converted; he died a few months after my return. His philosophy had been always very mild and moderate; he was even indignant at the impieties of Voltaire; and though there are many reprehensible passages in his writings, it is easy to see that he always respected religion, and his extreme love of truth obliged him to acknowledge that there was something miraculous in the history of Joan of Arc. This history is one of the finest pieces on the rivalry between France and England. He there ingenuously avows that all his historical researches have tended to convince him that there was something supernatural in the life and the exploits of that heroic girl. The philosophers never pardoned this avowal. As for M. de la Harpe, I was not at all surprised at his conversion, which I had predicted to him; he had adopted philosophism only to flatter Voltaire, to get a seat in the Academy, and to avoid having for his enemies all the powerful names in literature. He has confessed to me a thousand times that religion appeared to him a divine thing. He never attacked it but with moderation, and his understanding was too good not

to return to a belief of it. I frequently saw M. de Rulhières, who in my opinion was never any thing but a middling poet, and an unfaithful and superficial historian, but who had the manners of a gentleman, and in society was piquant and amiable. His disposition has been very much calumniated; he was satirical and fond of scandal, but he had many excellent qualities, his secrecy in society was inviolable, and he was constant in his friendships. In spite of his philosophism, he declared openly for *Adèle and Theodore,* when that work appeared, and defended it warmly against the numerous enemies which it raised up against me.

About this time also I saw M. de Monthion, Chancellor to Monsieur, Count d'Artois, a man of great abilities, and of the most amiable disposition. He is still living at the moment I am writing, and his conversation, his reading, and his prodigious memory make him certainly one of the most interesting old men of the age.*

I led a delicious life at Belle Chasse. I was relieved by virtue of my place from the mortal ennui of paying visits; the only ones I made were to Madame de Puisieux; these visits were short and

* This was written about the end of 1820: he died a few months after.—*(Note by the Author.)*

rare, because she came very often to see me in the evenings from eight o'clock till ten, the hour when our grate was closed. The grate could only be opened by one of the nuns; we had two who were charged with this duty weekly, and who lived in a small room built for them at the foot of our inner staircase. Men might come into our pavilion—this was a right reserved to the princes of the blood; but they could not enter the garden, and as I have mentioned, they were obliged to leave the pavilion at ten o'clock at the very latest. When any one wished to come in, he rung at the grate, and the nuns, putting down their veils, went to open the door; besides this precaution we had a little tower built beside the grate, in which were laid our letters, our packets, and the dishes for our meals; a bell, communicating with our antichambers, gave a signal to the valets to go and fetch these various articles. The valets, footmen, and domestics remained all day in our antichambers, but they left this part of the house at ten o'clock, to retire to their own rooms, which were situated (as were the offices and kitchens,) in the outer corridor. We had also a parlour, where our women, and where sometimes I myself, received persons on business. In this way, no person of the other sex slept in our pavilion, and

the nuns, in going away, carried off the keys of our grate. If after ten there was any commission to be executed, we rung for the servants, who received their orders from the parlour, and who had the keys of the door leading into the street. If a physician had been required, we could have sent one of our female servants to call up one of the nuns, while the valet was gone to fetch him.

I received every Saturday, all the persons of my acquaintance from six o'clock to half-past nine, and every evening all my intimate friends from eight till ten. M. de Genlis, my brother, my sisters-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Chartres, and three or four other persons formed that list. The Duke of Penthièvre came five or six times a year to see his grand-daughters; and as soon as they attained an age when they could amuse themselves with playthings, he sent them charming ones. The Duke of Orleans, and Madame de Montesson never entered Belle Chasse, and the Duke of Orleans never once sent a new year's gift to his grand-children. I never visited Madame de Montesson but on the first of the year, when I carried my two daughters with me; our visit was very short, for we were always received with great coldness.

The happiest years of my life were those I passed

at the châteaux of Saint Aubin, of Genlis, and of Sillery, and at Belle Chasse. Those have nothing to complain of in their lot, who can count in their existence more than twenty-five years of happiness. I had obtained permission to have my mother and children with me at Belle Chasse; and the inexpressible satisfaction of attending to my mother's comforts, and preventing even her wishes, was my sweetest occupation. I may here boast of an instance of filial respect, because I may venture to hope that it will prove advantageous to more than one young person. My mother was a woman of superior talent; she was good, full of feeling, and generous; she loved me; her conversation was delightful, but she had a great inequality of humour, and suffered herself to be entirely governed by a waiting-maid, who had lived with her upwards of twenty-two years: this woman, whose name was Madame Dufresne, was artful, false, ill-tempered and malignant to the last degree. My mother thought her an angel, because with her she was flattering, insinuating, and full of attentions. I had given all the servants to understand that I would listen to no complaints against Madame Dufresne, and that I would always support her against the other domestics. The consequence of this arrangement was, that in spite of her ill-natured disposi-

tion, she caused no disputes in the house during the whole time that I was at Belle Chasse, because the servants, who had a great interest in pleasing her, paid her great court, overlooked her tattling and imperious humour, and lived on very good terms with her. In other respects, she was useful to the establishment, and perfectly trust-worthy. To dispose her in my favour, I was continually making her presents; but notwithstanding all my endeavours, I could not avoid falling under her displeasure. There was at Belle Chasse a canoness of twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age, who was boarded there; her name was the Countess Depin; she was equally charming in point of understanding and face, and I was very intimate with her. Unfortunately she had a dog, which was perpetually fighting with that belonging to Madame Dufresne, and the latter happened to be beaten. Madame Dufresne, enraged at this, said many severe things to Madame Depin. I took the part of my friend, and Madame Dufresne conceived so violent a rancour against me on this account, that she made bitter complaints against me to my mother, who made me be called, and told me that if I did not immediately make excuses to Madame Dufresne she would quit Belle Chasse; I only replied that I would obey her. I accordingly went,

accompanied by my two daughters, the eldest of whom was thirteen. I told them what my mother exacted of me, and taking them by the hand, I carried them into Madame Dufresne's room, to whom I made my excuses in the frankest manner, and without the least shadow of irony. I even articulated the word *pardon;* I kissed her cordially, and left her, charmed at having had an opportunity of giving my daughters an example of filial obedience. To seal the reconciliation, I gave Madame Dufresne next day a handsome silver cup; she was extremely well satisfied with my behaviour, and my mother thanked me for it in the most touching manner. After that time we always lived on the best terms together.

To avoid all useless expenses, I had determined that none of my friends should dine at Belle Chasse, excepting my husband, my brother, and my two sisters-in-law; but even these dined there very rarely.

The extreme beauty of my eldest daughter, her talents, which were surprising for her age, and her charming disposition, my place as lady of honour, which remained vacant for her, and, finally, a regiment, which was promised to the person whom she should marry, caused her hand to be sought by a great number of persons. I had

no inclination to marry her so young, and I was anxious to complete her education; she was already a good musician, and played in a surprising manner on the harpsichord, and at least as well on the harp, which I had taught her, with the method I invented of exercising the two hands separately, upon passages containing all the difficulties of the instrument. I had begun with her at nine, and at thirteen she played on the harp, in the most brilliant manner, all the most difficult pieces for the harpsichord; she drew figures in a fine style, and from nature; she painted admirably in all styles, in miniature, and in oil; she succeeded equally well in playing on the harp and the harpsichord. I never knew any one who danced so well as she did. Besides these agreeable and brilliant accomplishments, she possessed a solid understanding, and had read much. Afterwards she studied chemistry, and in making some experiments she discovered a salt which bears her name. Her sister, who was full of good qualities, of elegance, cleverness, and wit, had less taste for the arts, except for drawing and painting, in several branches of which she excels; but nature had refused her talents for music. My family was nevertheless very musical; my father, my mother, my aunt, my brother, my husband, my eldest

daughter, and myself, all possessed a strong taste for music.

I may here say, that in music you can never force nature, unless by means of constant application; I gave my daughter Pulchérie the best masters—Charpentier for the harpsichord, Piccini for singing, and myself for the harp, and besides all this, a private teacher; her masters, during the two last years of her education, cost eighteen louis a month, and I never could give her a taste for music; it is much to be regretted that she should have lost so much time, which might have been better given to the acquirements of solid instruction. However, I did not neglect to give her lessons in history, and the various matters which contribute to the cultivation of the understanding: she learnt also, with ease, English and Italian; but, had I sacrificed the acquisition of music, I might have given her an extraordinary education in point of knowledge.

She inherited from nature, however, what is a thousand times more valuable than the most brilliant talents—a noble and disinterested disposition, and the most touching sensibility. I shall only cite one instance of this in order to give some idea of it. When she was fifteen, we were at Belle Chasse; I knew that she took care of a

poor old woman who lived in our street, but I thought her attention to this poor person only consisted in giving her the greater part of the pocket money or presents which were made her on her birth days, or on new year's days, by her father and uncle. It was winter, and the cold was exceedingly severe. As I had regulated the quantities of every thing used at Belle Chasse, I had desired that there should be only three logs carried into her room to serve for all the morning; but I observed that every day when she came into my room, she appeared to shiver in a way I had never remarked before, trembled with cold, got almost into the fire, and burnt her hands, &c. It was in vain I reprimanded her for this, she made no reply, but continued to behave in the same manner, for more than six weeks; at length my faithful Horain, who had an eye to the interests of the establishment, gave me notice that he had discovered a scullion called Albinori carrying away from Belle Chasse, every morning very early, a certain quantity of wood, and that being taken in the fact, he had insolently refused to give any explanation on the subject; I made Albinori be called, and interrogated him with great severity, but this did not seem at all to alarm him; he told me that he had only acted in pursuance of orders from Made

moiselle de Genlis, (as Madame de Valence was called after her sister's marriage,) who deprived herself of wood on purpose to give it to *her old woman;* Albinori made me this confession with all the pride of an ambassador charged with an honourable commission, but begged me to say nothing of it to Mademoiselle de Genlis, because she had requested him to keep the matter perfectly secret. My readers may judge of the inexpressible pleasure which this discovery caused me! I sent a load of wood to the poor woman, on condition that Pulchérie should keep her three logs. To suffer a personal privation, in order to do good, is a virtue equally rare and touching, and on the first restoration of her logs to her, my daughter used a charming expression. When I asked her if she was not glad to find a fire in her room on awaking, she said she had lost the habit of liking a warm bed-room. She has always preserved these admirable sentiments, and she is the most tender and excellent of mothers; her daughters owe to her care an education which leaves nothing to be wished for; they owe none of it to Madame Campan, under whose care they remained but four months; the education which has formed two persons whom I may venture to call so accomplished in point of cultivated understand-

ing, talents, and knowledge, and so eminent for the purity of their conduct, is entirely the work of of Madame de Valence.

I was the first governess of princes, in France, who adopted the custom practised in foreign countries of teaching children the living languages by means of talking them. I gave my young princesses an English maid-servant, and another who understood Italian thoroughly, so that at the age of five they understood three languages, and spoke English and French perfectly well. In order to perfect them in the former tongue, I bethought myself of placing a young English girl about their own age along with them. I had a little girl brought to me who was living at Paris, but I found her so disagreeable, that I refused to keep her. On this, the Duke of Chartres wrote to London to beg a person whom he knew, Mr. Forth, to send him a pretty little English girl, from five to six years old, after having her inoculated; this affair was somewhat long in being accomplished, Mr. Forth having at first selected a girl, who, after being examined by the physicians, was found to have a strong tendency to scrofula; a month after, he found another, whom he caused to be inoculated, and entrusted her to the care of a horse-dealer, called Saint Denis, whom the Duke

of Chartres had commissioned to purchase for him a fine English horse; he announced the execution of his commission to the Duke of Chartres in these terms:

"I have the honour of sending your serene highness the prettiest little girl, and the handsomest horse in England."

The child was in reality ravishing; and was remarkable for her graceful manners, her mildness, and her beauty. Her face was a handsome likeness of the Duchess of Polignac, but she had a better shape, a finer forehead, and a still more angelic expression; her name was *Nancy Syms*; I called her Pamela; she did not know a word of French, and in playing with the little princesses, she contributed greatly to familiarize them with the English language.

Though my eldest daughter was but fourteen, I at last determined upon marrying her. The choice of M. de Genlis fell upon a Belgian, the Marquis of Becelaer de Lawoestine; he was twenty years of age, his features were as handsome as regular, he was of high birth, and an only son; his father possessed an estate worth sixty thousand francs a-year, near Brussels; and finally, M. de Lawoestine was to inherit the title of grandee, after the death of the Princess of Ghistelle, his

aunt, who was fifty, and had no children. M. de Lawoestine's father was very avaricious, and refused to give any more than six thousand francs, but M. de Genlis gave his son-in-law his place of captain in the guards, and my furnished apartments at the Palais Royal; all which, joined to the place of lady of honour, which my daughter had, and the assurance of being one day very rich, formed a very comfortable establishment for them I gave my daughter, on her marriage, a quantity of splendid dresses in pieces, which I had been collecting for the last ten years with this intention besides, I had a great collection of china, gilt and plate, which I divided equally between my two daughters, without reserving a single cup to myself. I immediately put Pulchérie in possession of her share, which I caused to be carried into her room. I bought myself a collection of earthen ware, and while I remained at Belle Chasse, I never deviated from that simplicity, which I have ascribed to Madame d'Almane in *Adèle et Théodore*. I also gave my eldest daughter all my finest diamonds and jewels; among other things, very elegant bracelets and a diamond butterfly; all the rest I gave to her sister. I was then thirty-three, but I should have made the same sacrifices without hesitation at twenty. A week before the marriage, the Duke and Duchess of Chartres sent me magnificent bracelets

and a superb aigrette of diamonds, as a marriage present to my daughter. These presents were customary at the Palais Royal, but I decidedly refused them, not wishing to receive for my daughter more than I had received for myself; but I accepted a particular mark of favour from the prince and princess, because it was a distinction—they gave the marriage entertainment at the Palais Royal. My daughter was married at noon, in the chapel of the Palais Royal. The Marshal Prince of Soubise, a relation of M. de Lawoestine, on this occasion stood father to the bride. All M. de Lawoestine's relations, those of M. de Genlis, and my own, were invited to the entertainment; there were in all thrity-four persons present. In the evening I gave a little supper at Belle Chasse to my intimate friends, after which the gates of Belle Chasse were closed, and the bridegroom left with me his bride, who remained under my care two years longer. M. de Lawoestine's education had been much neglected, but he had naturally a good understanding, a very amiable disposition, and an excellent heart, and at twenty, every thing may be expected with these qualities; he has always had a sincere friendship for me, and I have preserved the same feeling towards him.

My tranquillity was disturbed by a melancholy event, which caused me a lively affliction. The

eldest of the two little princesses, Mademoiselle d'Orleans, was seized with the measles. As it was necessary to separate her sister from her, I proposed to the Duchess of Chartres, either to take her to Saint Cloud, or to remain at Belle Chasse with the invalid. The Duchess of Chartres, though she had not had the measles, insisted on attending to her sick child; all my arguments could not prevent her; upon this I went to Saint Cloud with the other princess, who was not infected with the disorder: the other was recovering; but on the ninth day M. Barthès, the physician, (M. Tronchin was now dead,) very injudiciously expressed his opinion that the princess might be carried to the Palais Royal: it was then very cold, and the journey brought on a relapse, which caused the child's death in six days; the Duchess of Chartres caught the infection, but it was very mild, and terminated happily. The princess who remained took the name of Orleans; she had hitherto borne that of Chartres; she was then five years old. No words can describe the grief of the child at the death of her sister; and her affliction lasted more than two years, aggravated by every recollection which recalled to her mind her image. Never was the grief of a grown person more lively or more profound; she

constrained herself in my presence, lest she should afflict me by her tears. Often, when in my room, and appearing to play, she turned her back to me and wept. I was obliged to hide all the play-things which had belonged to her sister, and to give her others which did not resemble them. She displayed even at that age, the sensitive heart of which she has since given so many proofs.

The Duke of Chartres, in the mean time, was sedulously engaged in endeavouring to find a tutor for his sons. The eldest, the Duke of Valois, was then about eight years old. They had an under-governor, called the Chevalier de Bonnard, who owed his place to me, and whom I had proposed to the duke at the recommendation of M. de Buffon. The Chevalier de Bonnard was not destitute of wit, and wrote very pretty verses; but having passed his life in the country, and not possessing the good taste which suffices readily to eradicate bad habits, he was somewhat vulgar. He wrote a letter to his son, with this address:—

"To Bonbon, my son, who sent me on my birth-day a bouquet of lilies and roses, with kisses *all above them.*"

This epistle he caused to be printed in his works. He also wrote some verses addressed to

me, on my comedies in the *Theatre of Education*, acted by my daughters, which ended thus :—

> Ces drames si beaux, si parfaits,
> Ne sont pas ceux de vos ouvrages
> Que j'aimerois mieux avoir faits.*

This is neither in good taste nor in good French; and this, combined with a certain *honeyed* manner had rendered him very disagreeable to the Duke of Chartres, who considered these matters as very important. M. Bonnard, though by no means a distinguished writer, has composed some pretty verses. The following have been often quoted, though I think injudiciously, for many finer might have been selected :—

> Ne parler jamais qu'à propos
> Est un rare et grand avantage;
> Le silence est l'esprit des sots,
> Et l'une des vertus du sage.

Silence is neither a *virtue* nor a *vice*, for it may be either criminal or virtuous, according to the occasion.

The Duke of Chartres thought, that if a prince had graceful manners, politeness towards women, and an honourable character, he was perfect; the last of these qualities is in fact essential, but the least of the virtues is preferable to mere elegance of manners.

* It ought to have been *le mieux*.—*(Note by the Author.)*

One evening that the Duke of Chartres came, as he generally did to Belle Chasse between eight and nine o'clock, finding me alone, he told me that there was no time to lose in procuring a tutor for his son, for that otherwise his children would have the manners of *shopmen ;* he told me also that the Duke of Valois had said to him that very morning, that he had *drummed* at his door a long time ; and that in the same conversation he had said in talking of his excursions to Saint Cloud, that he had been much tormented by his *relations,* meaning, by the *ants.** These were the important matters which induced the Duke of Chartres no longer to defer the nomination of a governor. He consulted me on the selection of one : I proposed M. de Schomberg, whom he refused to accept, alleging, that he would render the children pedantic. I then named the Chevalier de Durfort, who he said would give them a tone of bombast. I next spoke of M. de Thiars, but the Duke of Chartres objected to him as being too careless ; and said that he would pay no attention at all to the children. I then began to laugh, and said, "Well then, what do you think of me?"

* It is impossible to render more nearly in English the original phrase, preserving the *pun :* the word cousin means at once a *cousin* and a *gnat.—Translator.*

—"Why not," replied he seriously. "I protest that I only said what I have mentioned in jest, and that in all our previous conversations, nothing had occurred that could have led me to expect so singular a determination; but the air and manner of the Duke of Chartres impressed me deeply with the thought of doing something at once glorious to myself, and unprecedented in the history of education, and I earnestly hoped that the plan might be accomplished. I told the duke frankly my thoughts on the subject: the Duke of Chartres appeared delighted, and said, "The thing is decided, you must be *their tutor!*" These were his very words; he then quitted me, saying that he would return early next day: he accordingly came at eight, when we made all the necessary arrangements. It was agreed, that M. de Bonnard should remain, as well as the Abbé Guyot, who had also obtained his place at my recommendation; that these gentleman should bring the princes daily to Belle Chasse at noon, and come to take them away at ten in the evening; that a country-house should be purchased, at which eight months of the year should be passed; and that I should be the absolute mistress of their education. Knowing that I myself was to give them lessons in history, mythology, literature, &c. which the tutors never

did, and which, added to the lessons I gave Mademoiselle d'Orleans, would not leave me an instant unemployed, the Duke of Chartres offered me twenty thousand francs; I replied, that so much time and pains could only be repaid by friendship: he insisted, but in vain; for I decidedly refused. I have thus *gratuitously* educated three princes; a fact universally acknowledged, and which has never been contested. I have asserted it in my *Lessons of a Governess,* printed in the beginning of 1790, under the eyes of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, who have never denied the fact. The custom of the Palais Royal was to allow twelve thousand francs and their apartments to the tutors, and at the end of their task, the king gave them a blue ribbon. This was the reward given to the Count de Pont, who had only educated a single prince, and who had never given him a single lesson; this is the reason why the Duke of Chartres offered me twenty thousand francs instead of twelve thousand; but I refused the offer, as I did all proposals of payment in money. Besides the great pleasure I felt in giving him this proof of attachment, the confidence he seemed to place in me was so extraordinary and so honourable to me, that it appeared as if the acceptance of money would have effaced all the glory of the thing in my own eyes. The

Duchess of Chartres was excessively delighted at my undertaking the charge of all her children: the Duke of Chartres, before declaring the plan publicly, went to acquaint the king with his intention; it was thought that he would be offended with such a deviation from custom, but he approved it, on the contrary, at once, saying, "You are right, and I think your plan excellent:" upon this the matter was made public. All the persons belonging to the Palais Royal, who expected the situation of tutor to the princes, were enraged at this, except M. de Schomberg, who behaved admirably towards me, and who remained my friend: but the Chevalier de Durfort and M. de Thiars conceived an animosity against me which nothing could ever abate. This event did not cause so much surprise and remark in society as I had believed. I may truly say, that the plan was generally approved of.

About this time I published *Adèle et Théodore,* of which the first edition was bought up in less than a week: this work at once ensured the suffrages of the public, and the irreconcileable hatred of all the so-called philosophers and their partisans. The Chevalier de Bonnard, who owed his situation to me, and who had up to that time displayed the greatest attachment to me, was in despair; he felt that while conjoined with me, the honours of the

princes' education would not be accorded to him; that he would be obliged to follow my ideas and not his own; it seemed to him very humiliating to be obliged to obey the directions of a woman; besides, he had been accustomed to pass all the fine part of the year at St. Cloud, where he met all his friends, and he was forced to give up all these pleasures; so that he could neither contain nor conceal his vexation. I have always been so credulous as to count upon the friendship which has been proffered to me; so that I was equally surprised and grieved at his displeasure and discontent. He threatened to give up his place; upon which I replied, that I begged him to think better of it; that if he remained, he would always find a friend in me: that I might eventually become very useful to him, especially as I should think more of the advantage of those who had assisted in the education of the princes than of my own; that I wanted nothing for myself; and that therefore I should have the more right to ask favours for others; but that if he insisted upon giving up his situation, I should make a request for the pension which was generally allowed to the under governors who had entirely completed their charge. He had only been in the situation eighteen months, and the Duke of Valois was but eight years old. M. de Bonnard

left the situation, and obtained the pension I had promised to solicit, which was an unprecedented occurrence. So far from being grateful, he became my most inveterate enemy, and remained so till his death. M. de Buffon, to whom I referred my cause on this occasion, rendered ample justice to my motives, and praised my generous behaviour, which increased his friendship for me. He said, and said publicly, that M. de Bonnard's ingratitude was inexcusable, and that he could not conceive how he should not have preferred being under the command of a female friend, who was the best qualified person possible for directing, than to obey a governor, who had neither talents nor information. The Abbé Guyot remained, but he continued much discontented; and he conceived from this time a secret hatred of me, which he has always shown.

Singular, and even glorious actions are so ill suited to the condition of women, that they risk by performing them, the repose of their whole lives. They are formed for *quiet* happiness; and they are wrong when they complain of such a state, for it is the purest and the most durable.

In M. de Bonnard's place I chose M. Lebrun, who had been for several years the secretary of M. de Genlis; he was a well-behaved and honest man;

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARA...

he had read little of history or literature, but he was a good mathematician. He had very becoming manners, excellent morals, and a mild and somewhat phlegmatic disposition. The Abbé Guyot was a very superficial person, but he made pretensions to talent which gave him an air of pedantry: he was in the habit of continually repeating the phrase—*If I may so venture to express myself*—when he was about to say the thing the least hazardous, the most common, and the most generally known. A few years previous he had been in Russia, and held the office of *Chargé d'Affaires* for a few months; he attached so much importance to that honour, and appeared to be so much occupied with the discharge of the duties of his office, that the empress in talking of him said, he was not merely *charged*, but *overcharged* with the affairs of his place.

I arranged with M. Lebrun, that every morning at the Palais Royal the princes should rise at seven; should learn their lesson of Latin, and perform their religious duties with the abbé, and take their lesson of arithmetic from M. Lebrun, who was to bring to them Belle Chasse at eleven. The abbé and M. Lebrun remained, or if they chose, went away, and returned to dinner at two o'clock: after dinner they were at perfect liberty. I charged my-

self with the duties of the rest of the evening up to nine o'clock: these gentlemen returned to supper, and took away the princes at ten. I begged M. Lebrun to keep a journal of the princes' morning hours, leaving a blank margin for my remarks. I wrote the first few pages of this journal: these pages contained private instructions for M. Lebrun relative to the education of the princes. M. Lebrun brought me this journal every morning, which I immediately read; and I reprimanded or praised, punished or rewarded the princes, according to its contents. In the course of the day I wrote my observations in the margin, and gave it in the evening to M. Lebrun, who brought it again to me next day. At the end of the year, these manuscripts formed a large volume; I kept all that were written, and the collection formed as many volumes as there were years. Besides this, I kept a private journal of all that passed between the children and myself, to which I added my remarks; and at the close of each day, I read the whole to them, making them all sign the book; so that I could render an account of their education minute by minute. I thought these journals would have been very interesting to the Duke and Duchess of Chartres, but they always refused to read them, saying, that they entirely confided in me. They were continued

with the most scrupulous exactitude up to the end of their education; and they are now in the hands of the Duke of Orleans, to whom I gave them. I have selected many passages from them in my *Letters of a Governess*, which I published as I have stated, while still in France in 1790. The first thing which I did was to remove from my new pupils a music and singing master, the only teacher which M. de Bonnard had thought proper to give them, though they had neither voice nor ear; in other matters they were totally ignorant; and the Duke of Valois, who was eight years old, was unparalleled for want of application. I began by reading history to them: the Duke of Valois, instead of listening, yawned and stretched himself; and I was greatly surprised to find him at our first reading lie down on the sofa on which we were sitting, and place his feet on the table before us. In order to make him sensible of my method, I ordered him into confinement; but at the same time I contrived so to make him feel the propriety of his punishment, that he never felt any resentment against me on account of it: he possessed natural good sense, which displayed itself in the first days of our acquaintance; he was as fond of what was reasonable as other children are of whatever is frivolous. As soon as the *sense* of the thing was

clearly presented to him, he listened with attention; and he became sincerely attached to me, because he always found me consistent and reasonable. I was obliged to cure him of a great many low phrases, and of a number of absurd fancies: he was greatly afraid of dogs, and M. de Bonnard had the *kindness*, in his walks in the Bois de Boulogne, to make two footmen walk before, in order to clear away all the dogs that might happen to be on the road which Monseigneur had to pass over. I had only occasion to employ a single conversation, in order to make the Duke of Valois feel the absurdity of such a weakness; he listened attentively to what I said, kissed me, and begged me to give him a dog, which I did: he thus overcame his repugnance to these animals, which had become a real aversion; and from that day he never evinced the slightest token of dislike to dogs. He had also a dread of the smell of vinegar—a folly of which I as easily cured him, as of his antipathy to dogs. I soon found that he possessed an astonishing memory, and I flatter myself that I succeeded in developing and cultivating in him this valuable gift of nature. I engaged as the second valet-de-chambre at Belle Chasse, a German musician, who played well on the piano, and who was perfectly

well acquainted with the grammar of his own language; he was the person who taught the Duke of Valois German, and the lessons were always given in my room, and under my own eye. I gave him an Italian valet-de-chambre, with strict orders never to talk to the prince or his brother but in that language; and I gave him a teacher of English, of whom he took lessons in my room, as he did all which he took at Belle Chasse, except in the single instance of drawing; the latter he learnt in the drawing-room by candle-light.

The Duke of Montpensier, a prince so interesting from his misfortunes, his virtue, and his talents, has left Memoirs, which date but from the period of the persecutions he experienced during the revolution. The editor of these memoirs says, that I educated the Duke of Montpensier, and the princes, his brothers, *à la Jean Jacques*. There is something so comical in this assertion, that I cannot pass it in silence; I had already published *Adèle et Théodore*, before undertaking the education of the young princes, of whom the eldest was not eight; and I already had for enemies all the partisans of Rousseau's system of education. I gave my pupils teachers of every thing which I could not teach them my-

self, and from their earliest infancy, I never neglected to inspire them with the deepest sentiments of religion. I took care to fortify their bodies by gymnastic exercises proportioned to their strength, none of which I borrowed from the *Emile;* most of the exercises were of my own invention, and have lately been revived publicly, and with success. It is easy to see how far this plan corresponds with that of *Emile!*

A short time after this, my brother lost his angelic wife; she died at Nice, whither she had been taken by my mother and brother. I have before mentioned that, at her death, she left me Busca, an excellent servant, who had been with her from the age of thirteen; she left an only son, called Cæsar, who was five years old, of whom I undertook the charge; he was brought up with the princes, and was one of the finest boys that ever existed.

The Duke of Chartres had purchased St. Leu, a charming residence, where we passed yearly all the fine part of the season, that is to say, eight months in the year. I had a garden laid out, in the fine park belonging to the house, a small garden for each of my pupils, which they planted and dug with their own hands. I engaged a German gar-

dener, who never spoke to them but in German; he accompanied them, along with their German valet-de-chambre, in their morning walks, and on these occasions German was the only language used; in their evening walks they spoke English, as well as at dinner, and *we supped in Italian*. I had taken for our almoner, at the recommendation of M. Doria, the pope's nuncio, the Abbé Maristini, his relation, twenty-eight years of age, who was well educated, and perfectly acquainted with the literature of his own country; he gave daily lessons of Italian to the princes in my room. I moreover attached to their list of teachers an apothecary, named M. Alyon, who was a good botanist and excellent chemist. He accompanied the princes in all their walks, to make them examine plants, and to teach them botany; and every summer he gave us a course of chemistry, at which I was always present; I also gave them a teacher of drawing, (M. Mérys, a Pole,) who had a great talent for working in water colours mixed with gum; I caused him to make a historical magical lantern, which was painted on glass, and designed from my descriptions. He thus painted pictures of sacred, ancient, and Roman history, and the history of China and

Japan; nothing was ever seen more beautiful than that magic lantern, which was exhibited by my pupils, by turns, once a week.

The first year of my residence at Belle Chasse, I brought from Burgundy my niece, Henriette de Sercey, who was an orphan and a Creole; she was educated at Belle Chasse by my mother and myself, and was nine years of age when brought thither.

I invented for my pupils a kind of game which delighted them, and with which I have often been amused myself. I made them put in scenes, and act in the garden the most celebrated voyages, related in M. de la Harpe's abridgment of the Abbé Prévot's collection of travels. Every person in the house took a part in these representations; I played in them myself; we had ponies for the processions, the fine river in the park represented the sea, and a set of pretty little boats formed our fleets; we had also a wardrobe of costumes. The finest of the voyages we played, were those of Vasco de Gama and Snelgrave. I also caused a little portable stage to be erected, which was placed in the great dining-room, upon which we performed historic pictures; I furnished the subjects, and before the curtain drew up, M. Mérys grouped the actors, who were

generally children; those who did not perform were obliged to divine the subject, whether historical or mythological; and thus, in the course of an evening, we had sometimes twelve pictures. The celebrated David, who often came to St. Leu, thought this a charming game, and took great pleasure in grouping himself these fugitive pictures. I had a real theatre built, which was of very fine proportions: the bottom scene opened, and displayed, when you chose, a long walk of the garden, all illuminated, and decorated with garlands of flowers. During the course of the princes' education, we played successively in that theatre all the pieces of my *Théatre d'Education*, and the children played pantomimes in it. There was one of these so remarkable, that I cannot avoid mentioning it. The piece was ***Psyche*** persecuted by Venus; Madame de Lawoestine, then fifteen, represented Venus, her sister Psyche, and Pamela, Love. Never will there be again seen three faces together so full of beauty, charms, and graces; David was enraptured with that pantomime, which realized, he said, the perfection of the *beau idéal.*

In the winter at Paris, I contrived to make every moment useful: I had a turning-machine put into my anti-chamber, and in the hours of

recreation, all the children, as well as myself, learned to turn. I thus acquired, successively, along with them, a knowledge of all the trades in which strength is not required: that, for instance, of a pocket-book-maker. I made along with them an infinite number of morocco portfolios, which looked as well as those of English manufacture. I excelled as a basket-master; we also made tapes, ribbons, gauze, pasteboard, and plans in relievo; artificial flowers, gratings for libraries in brass wire, marbled paper, gilt frames, all sorts of work in hair, even to wigs; and the boys learnt cabinet-making. The Duke of Valois here surpassed all the rest: with the aid only of the Duke of Montpensier, his brother, he manufactured for the house of a poor peasant woman of St. Leu, of whom he had taken charge, a large press, and a table with drawers, which were as well made as if they had been manufactured by the best carpenter. All these employments took nothing from the hours devoted to study; it was their only kind of amusement, and never were children so happy during the whole period of their education. Beside their palace of the five orders of architecture, which they could build up and take down at pleasure, I made them make in the same proportions, and with the same perfection,

all the tools and utensils which belong to the arts and sciences; the interior of a laboratory, with the retorts, crucibles, alembics, &c.; the interior of a cabinet of natural history, &c.; and all the tools used by workmen they executed in miniature with admirable precision. At the close of their education, these were displayed to the curious in the gallery of the Palais Royal; they have since been placed in the halls of the Louvre, where I have seen them, during the reign of the emperor. I was very proud to see the public admire the playthings I had once invented for my pupils.

At Paris, as I have already stated, all our walks were instructive: we never went out but to see cabinets of pictures, of natural history, philosophy, or curiosities, or else to examine manufactories, of which we had previously read accounts in the Encyclopædia; and this enabled us to discover that the work often gave very inexact and ill-written descriptions of them. During our stay in the workshops, each of my pupils wrote down upon ass-skin whatever he thought most remarkable; I did so also, and afterwards put these notes in order, of which I made a large book; it was filled with remarks on the abuses of apprenticeships, and on the improvements which might be introduced into the system. I have lost this

volume, along with some others; it was one of those which I regret the most. After having examined all the manufactories of Paris, we went to visit those of the provinces. At Paris, at that period, there was only a manufactory of pins; we went to L'Aigle merely to see one of needles; to St. Gobin, to see glass melted, &c.

I shall not here speak of the gymnastics I invented for my pupils; all these details will be found in my work, called *Letters of a Governess*, which it is necessary to read, if any one wishes to have an exact idea of the system of education I adopted with the princes. Every evening, at Paris or in the country, two hours before the lessons in drawing began, they all met in my room, and placed themselves in a semi-circle opposite me; we then commenced reading aloud something relative to history, mythology, literature, or natural history; each child read aloud a quarter of an hour, while I attended to their pronunciation, and interrupted the reader from time to time to make the necessary remarks. When each had finished his quarter of an hour's reading, I read myself to them for the remainder of the two hours; while they were reading, I made artificial flowers, or worked at some other thing of the same kind, which did not interfere with my attention to the

reading. Of all their studies this was the one they always preferred; they were delighted with it, and eagerly longed for the hour which was devoted to it. They made extracts from what they read, which I corrected; and besides this exercise, I gave them every week a subject for original composition, which I also corrected. The Duke of Montpensier excelled all the others in this branch of study; he had in his style a natural elegance which I never witnessed in any other child; but the compositions of the prince, his elder brother, were already distinguished for the spirit of order, the good sense, and upright sentiments which formed the character of his mind. When he had reached the age of twelve, I hired a box at the Théatre Français, in order that my pupils might witness the representations of our finest plays. I carried them thither about once a week, (excepting in Lent), selecting only such pieces as might give them some useful lesson. When the afterpiece was licentious or immoral, we did not remain to see it. Though I was still young, I had given up the theatre; but I thought that if I did not take my pupils there, it would look like an indirect censure of their parents, who had boxes at the theatre and the opera; besides, I had been much alarmed by the fatal consequences of the

rigorous system of education pursued in the case of the Prince de Lamballe, which were so notorious. I felt also that it was right for princes of the blood, who were born for display, and for the protection of the arts, to be sometimes present at theatrical representations, and to be able to judge of their influence on morals and manners; their decision, when they are discerning, is of so much weight, that it always has a beneficial effect upon that department of literature, as on every other. Finally, though I have always despised popular applause, I must confess, that, in this case, the fear of being blamed by the public influenced my judgment.

Every Saturday we received company at Belle Chasse; this was a rule I had established, to form the princes in politeness, and to accustom them to a habit of listening to conversation. I kept a journal of all they had failed in, and remarks on what they ought to have said and done.

When Mademoiselle d'Orleans attained the age of seven, we had concerts and parties every Saturday. At that age, Mademoiselle d'Orleans, whom I had begun to teach the harp at the age of five, played in a manner really surprising. At these concerts we played together, accompanied by a violin, bass, and sometimes a clarionet. I

gave Mademoiselle d'Orleans two harp lessons a day, of which the first took nothing from my time. As soon as I rose, she came into my room with her harp, and played without interruption during my breakfast, my toilette, and while I had my hair dressed; the latter was a long operation, as I wore my thick hair up to the time of the emigration. I read, as was my ancient custom, but this did not prevent me from listening to the harp, from detecting the mistakes of my pupil, or from making her play the passage over again when necessary. At the second lesson, I played along with Mademoiselle d'Orleans, in order to give her the expression and the measure, and this lesson lasted at least an hour and a half. She always took the lessons I gave her with the most decided application, and I can truly say, that I never knew a single defect in Mademoiselle d'Orleans. She was naturally very pious, and she possessed all the virtues. She sometimes committed faults, but, I repeat, she had not a single defect—that is to say, a vicious inclination, or a singular evil quality predominating in her. I have no interest in avowing this truth, for it would have been much more to the gratification of my self-love, and to the credit of my system of education, had nature given her a less perfect disposi-

tion. She had talent, and her talents resembled those of her father; he is ingenious, and ready in conversation, qualities which, joined to prudence, good sense, and good nature, form altogether a person as agreeable in company, as excellent in the more intimate relations of life.

I have already spoken of the disposition of the Duke of Valois; his two brothers had each characters quite different; the Duke of Montpensier was far from communicative; but he had a feeling and generous heart, and, as I have before mentioned, a natural elegance in all his person, and something romantic about his face, his disposition, and his manners; if I had been able to superintend the cultivation of his mind for a longer period, he would have become a distinguished writer; he had a precocious fulness and delicacy in his ideas, which is rarely found in childhood, of which I shall give one example. When I took them to a play, which they saw for the first time, each of them made a note of some part of it, which they brought and read to me next day. One day (the Duke of Montpensier was then twelve) one of my pupils, in reading his paper, and in speaking of two lovers, said, that the princess *declared* her love. The Duke of Montpensier here interrupted him: "That expression

(said he) is improper; a man *declares* his love—a woman *confesses* hers." There is certainly in that distinction a reflective delicacy, very extraordinary at the age of twelve. The study of history, of sciences, and languages, had no attractions for him; but literature had many charms in his eyes, and he was a passionate lover of the arts, especially of painting and drawing, in which he excelled, not merely as an amateur, but as an artist. This talent showed itself from infancy; and as I think we are bound to cultivate all the gifts of nature, I made his lessons in drawing much longer than the others. Besides, as there are many seductions to be found in the circle in which heaven destined him to be born, which are not to be found in any other, it is pleasant to be able to place in the balance against them, along with many virtues, a pure and passionate taste for the fine arts. The last of the three princes, the Count of Beaujolais, who was entrusted to me at the age of three, was equally charming in face, talent, and disposition. Even his faults were amiable—a thing which, though I do not like it to be said, it was impossible not to think of when you saw him. We thought also we discovered in him many traits of resemblance with Henry IV., whom every Frenchman fancies himself to have known.

I shall here quote two traits of the young Count of Beaujolais, which will describe him perfectly. He was asked why he always gave his foster-sister, when she came to see him, his prettiest playthings? "Oh," replied he, "these are those I like the best, and therefore I think they will please her the most." As he often caressed this little girl, some one seemed to be surprised at it, saying that she was very ugly. "Ah," cried he, "if she were but clean, you would see how pretty she is!"

My nephew Cæsar was violent and volatile, but clever, full of feeling, and had a natural tendency to all that was good and generous. Time, his education and misfortunes tempered his vivacity; and there only remained enough of it to render him amiable and brilliant. Cast into the army at the age of fifteen, without either guide or adviser, he performed feats the most surprising for his age; though only a volunteer, he rallied the fugitives, and carried off a standard from the enemy, when not quite sixteen; General Dumouriez demanded his name on the field of battle, called him to him, and told him that he created him a captain; my nephew replied that he was not the age: "That is an additional reason why I should," replied the general; and he was

made captain. I shall hereafter relate other traits of this distinguished young man's noble disposition, whose deplorable death, at the age of twenty-eight, has been one of the greatest afflictions of my life.

To continue the portraits of Belle Chasse, I ought to speak of my niece Henriette and Pamela. Henriette was pretty, and her animated face was pleasing to every one. All her talent then consisted in the goodness of her understanding; she has since displayed it in her conversation, and in her letters. When at Belle Chasse she never said pretty things, but she comprehended all the subjects of conversation, and learned every thing with wonderful facility. I have known her to learn a very difficult dance, the *pas Russe*, by merely being present at the lesson, during which she was engaged in embroidering. This dance was taught by the famous d'Auberval, of the Opera, and danced by Mademoiselle d'Orleans and Pamela. One day Pamela, having a pain in her foot, was unable to dance; Henriette offered to replace her, which made d'Auberval smile; but she rose, began to dance, and performed all the steps as regularly as if she had learned and practised them. D'Aubervalle's surprise was extreme; he said there was not a single opera-dancer who

could do as much. Henriette learned to count with the same facility; she had the best handwriting at Belle Chasse; she drew very prettily, and finished her works with great care; she sung admirably, her voice was beautiful, and she was as clever as a little fairy. The only accomplishment I never could succeed in giving her, was to play on an instrument—she did not play well upon any; though, it must be allowed, that she did not devote enough of time to this branch of study.

Pamela had a beautiful face; candour and sensibility were the basis of her character; she never told a single falsehood, nor employed the slightest deception in the whole course of her education; her cleverness was full of sentiment, and she said many pretty things, which came always ftom the heart. I was deeply attached to her, but my attachment was an unfortunate one. This child, who was so charming, had the least application I ever saw in any one; she had no memory, and was very volatile, which added to the charms of her face, by giving her an appearance of vivacity, which, joined to the indolence of her disposition, and to great cleverness, rendered her very piquant. Her person was active and light, and she ran like Atalanta; but her mind was lazy to the last de-

gree, and she turned out the least fit person possible for reflecting. Her fate threw her into extraordinary situations; she found herself without an adviser or a guide in a thousand dangerous circumstances; yet she always conducted herself admirably, as long as her husband lived, and, in some cases, in a manner that was truly heroic.

I established rewards for the children, but only in cases which did not encourage their self-love; prizes for application, mildness, goodness, &c.; there was also a prize for drawing, of which M. David was the dispenser. Every year, on the first of January, we displayed in the drawing-room all the works we had executed through the year, which formed pretty little stores, which were afterwards distributed among our friends; the drawings of the children which had obtained prizes, were displayed in handsome frames.

I am not superstitious; but there is, in the idea of the supernatural, something which pleases and strikes persons of lively imaginations; without believing in presages or presentiments, I have never been able to help observing them, and making an application of them. I am going to mention a melancholy omen, which affected me deeply in spite of myself. There was at the upper end of the park of St. Leu, a kind of elevated terrace,

where we had remarked that the vegetation was always finer than elsewhere, the grass more thickly grown, and the wild-flowers infinitely larger; I proposed to myself to plant here as many trees as I had pupils, placing at the foot of each tree the name of the child, and an inscription; persons were immediately engaged to work at this, and in digging, we were much surprised to find in the ground a quantity of human bones; we learned that this spot had formerly been a burying-ground. This discovery struck and saddened me, and I would not allow the trees to be planted. I have since lost four pupils, reckoning my eldest daughter, and all in "the most high and palmy state" of their youth!

Amidst all these engagements, I pursued my private occupations with more ardour than ever; I had already published *Adèle et Théodore*, which occasioned me my first literary vexations; that antiphilosophical work obtained the highest success with the public, and surpassed all my hopes, but it made me numerous and irreconcileable enemies; besides, I had foreseen, as may be proved from the work itself, in reading the letters from M. de Lagaraye to Porphire, in which I predicted and described all I have since experienced. I continued to receive visits from M. de la Harpe,

who still displayed the greatest attachment to me; when my work was about to appear, I asked him if he was going to notice it himself, not concealing from him the fact, that it was *very religious*, and that, consequently, it contained many things against the modern philosophy; he replied, that he would pass over all that very lightly, and that he would speak of the rest of the work with all the impartiality for which I knew him to be remarkable. A few days after, he called on me to say, that he himself would not review it, but that I should lose nothing by the change, as he had entrusted it to the Abbé Remi, for whom he could answer as for himself; that, besides, he (M. de la Harpe) being editor of the *Mercure*, would read the notice before it went to press, and would not leave in it a single word that could be displeasing to me. I answered (which was quite true) that M. Gaillard had offered to write a review of it, but that I had declined his services, saying, that M. de la Harpe had requested me to allow him to do the same thing; and I added, that I should certainly have preferred M. Gaillard to M. Remi, who was quite unknown to me. M de la Harpe repeated to me a thousand times, that I should be perfectly satisfied with the notice, and that he would be particularly careful

of the article. At the time the notice appeared, the first edition of *Adèle et Théodore* was already bought up. What was my surprise on reading the review to find it full of abuse from beginning to end, and charged with the most calumnious and atrocious personalities! As it was the first piece of malignity of this description I had experienced, I was very much affected by it: I wrote immediately to M. de la Harpe, to reproach him with his treachery, and to tell him that I would never see him again in my life. I have since learned that the Abbé Remi was an obscure man of letters, without any talent, and entirely devoted to d'Alembert. The latter was the real author of this libel which displeased every body; the Abbé Remi only put his name to it.

The remarks on society in *Adèle et Théodore* raised me also many enemies, because they were true, piquant, and without exaggeration. All the fringe untwisters* were furious against me: this fashion was so prevalent then, that I must explain the practice. The ladies were in the habit of asking all the gentlemen of their acquaintance for their old gold epaulettes, their gold lace sword-knots, or the laces on their coats, &c. which were thus taken from their servants, and which the

* *Parfileuses.*

ladies then untwisted—that is to say, they separated the gold from the silk, to sell the former afterwards for their own profit. Besides they received as presents on new year's day, bobbins of tinsel, or little things covered with gold, which were first untwisted and then sold. In general an able untwister might gain at this singular trade one hundred louis a year! . . . I had a right to remark upon this practice, for in spite of the universality of the fashion, I had never adopted the practice of untwisting: this fashion of asking men for their gold lace, in order to take away the gold and to sell it, and these presents of gold lace which you received on new year's day, seemed to me the meanest things in the world. For example, I have seen the Maréchale de Luxembourg give Madame de Blot a muslin apron trimmed with gold fringe, and put up in a packet containing, besides its own value, about fifteen or twenty louis' worth of fringes. I have seen Madame de Boufflers receive from the Duke of Lauzun a false harp made of gold fringe, which cost nearly a thousand francs, &c. All this was untwisted, to be sold at half price: it would have been much less expensive to the giver, and less troublesome to the receiver, to have got the money at once. The incident of the gown from which the fringes

were pulled off, which is related in *Adèle et Théodore*, is true: I witnessed the adventure at Rainci; M. de Chartres was the person who played this gay frolic: it is the only personality I have ever allowed myself in my writings, but the fact was witnessed by fifty persons besides myself. The following is the manner in which it is related in *Adèle et Théodore*: "One day before our usual walk, we were all assembled in the saloon, when suddenly Madame de R . . . . remarked that the fringes of my dress would be excellent for untwisting. At the same time a movement of vivacity induced her to cut off one of my fringes; and immediately I was surrounded by ten ladies, who with charming grace and vivacity, tore off my dress, and put all my fringes and laces in their bags." (*Adèle et Théodore*, vol. ii.) It was a bet relative to untwisting that occasioned me finally to gain the heart of the Prince of Condé at Chantilly, when I wagered twenty-four gold bobbins of twelve francs each with the Duke of Coigny that I would mount one of the cascades, like a stair, without falling: I gained the bet, and in the evening in the drawing-room I divided the bobbins among all the ladies, who received them with great goodwill, though they had previously affected to be greatly scandalized when I proposed to mount

the cascade. My remarks on the fashion of untwisting in *Adèle et Théodore* for ever put an end to this disgraceful fashion: and there never was afterwards an instance of a woman who ventured to ask a man for gold lace to untwist. All the enormous sacks of untwisted gold disappeared, and in its stead came embroidery and tapestry, which used so agreeably to occupy our mothers and our grandmothers. *Adèle et Théodore* contributed also to put out of fashion all sentimental affectation, and the rage for making a common note clever: there are few works of which the opinions have had more influence upon the customs of society. *Adèle et Théodore* lost me a friend—the Chevalier de Chastellux, who through attachment to the philosophers, though he neither shared their hatred nor their resentments, ceased to visit me. M. de Rulhierès, and M. Gaillard, though philosophers, remained faithful to me. On my return from Italy, at a supper given by Madame de Meulan, I sat at table between M. de Champfort the wit, and M. de Rulhierès: I told them the story of the Duchess of Cerifalco, and I added that the subject would make a fine novel; they told me that they had a thousand times met in romances with ladies shut up in caverns, and that the story, though very singular, would form but a

middling romance. I replied that the incident might be rendered original by describing the ideas and the feelings which might be supposed to be experienced by any one living for nine years in a cavern; but they asserted that it was impossible for any author to identify himself with such a character in such a situation. When the work appeared, the episode of the duchess met with unisal approbation.* I then reminded M. de Rulhières of what he had said on the subject at Madame de Meulan's: "True, Madam," said he, "but at that time I was not aware that *you* had passed nine years in a cavern." This was the most beautiful compliment I received upon the publication of that story.

While the children were taking their lessons in my room, I was engaged in making extracts for them of what we read; and I composed, when the grate of Belle Chasse was closed, from ten o'clock till two or three in the morning. Such was the course of my life, during the whole of the time I was occupied with the education of the princes.

There was a pleasant mistake with regard to M. de Rulhières about *Adèle et Théodore.* The infamous work of M. de Laclos, entitled *Les Liai-*

* The same story was taken as the subject of an opera in three acts called *Camille, ou le Souterrain.—(Note by the Author.)*

sons Dangereuses, appeared at the same time with *Adèle et Théodore*, but anonymously. M. de Rulhières had a friend in Italy, called M. d'Hericourt: he had promised to send him all the books which appeared, which made any noise; he therefore made up two separate and sealed packets, the one containing *Adèle et Théodore*, the other the *Liaisons Dangereuses*. Wishing to make mine reach his friend first, he took an opportunity which presented itself of forwarding it by a speedy conveyance: but he made a mistake, and thinking he had sent my book, he sent off that of M. de Laclos with a letter which contained only general praise of the work and stated that it was written by me, so that M. d'Hericourt thought for about a fortnight that I was the author of the *Liaisons Dangereuses*. He thereupon wrote to M. de Rulhières to express how great was his surprise, to find that a woman who was still young, and the instructress of the princes of the blood, had the inconceivable effrontery to publish such a work. M. de Rulhières showed me this letter, which affected me deeply; I could not support the thought that a person of understanding should have entertained such an opinion of me, and I was not restored to a state of self-satisfaction until M. de Rulhières brought me a second letter from M. d'Hericourt, which proved that he

was undeceived, and that he had read *Adèle et Théodore*.

There were not wanting persons in society who thought they could furnish a key to *Adèle et Théodore*. It was the first time that a woman who was still young, and had lived in the highest society, had attempted to depict it. A truth of manner (which is assuredly neither to be found in Crébillon nor Marmontel) made every one believe that all the characters were drawn from nature; a thing which was never said of the writers above mentioned. This was a mistake: I have painted pictures, and not portraits; I have collected several features to be found in nature, but I always interdicted myself all personality that could offend; and when I have recalled the remembrance of persons either ridiculous or vicious, I have so disguised the likeness as to conceal the person, or in general I have given the likeness a different sex from the original. The only finished and real likeness I have drawn in *Adèle et Théodore* is that of my eldest daughter Madame de Lawoestine under the name of Madame D'Ostalis, and her's I have certainly not embellished. Two women* claimed the portrait of Madame de Valmont, the wife of a farmer-general, and I can safely say that

* Madame Miller and Madame de la Reynière. *(Author.)*

I neither thought of the one nor the other; they discovered their resentment against me as injudiciously as unjustly, for it seemed strange that they should persist in seeing themselves in a disagreeable portrait which resembled them in nothing, but in the fact of their being the wives of financiers. The portrait was finally fixed on Madame de la Reynière, because she told every body a fact of which I was entirely ignorant—that she had a sister who was an abbess. I was confounded upon learning this fact, which destroyed all faith in my denial: it was an unlucky chance; but it is not the less true, that I, in common with many other persons of Madame de la Reynière's acquaintance, was in a state of complete ignorance as to the matter, and that the discovery of it sincerely afflicted me. It is perfectly clear that if I had ever heard of that religious person, I should have refrained from giving her a farmer-general's wife as a sister; besides, the portrait bore no resemblance to Madame de la Reynière. It is very singular that the same individual should have had an uncle and a brother bishops, and a sister an abbess.

Some time after the publication of *Adèle et Théodore*, M. de la Harpe was desirous of bringing out his tragedy of *Joan of Naples*, but being afraid of a party against his piece, he was mean-

spirited enough, trusting to my generosity, to beg me in writing to solicit the Duchess of Chartres to go in public to the first performance of his play. He knew the princess was so much revered and beloved by the public, that by giving that proof of her interest in the author's success, the audience would hear the piece to the end. I proved how well grounded was M. de la Harpe's confidence in me; for although the Duchess of Chartres felt the utmost repugnance to place herself in the light of publicly taking an interest in an author whom she did not know, and a play which she had not read, I induced her to grant the favour demanded. Her presence, in fact, prevented the piece from being hissed, and it was heard to the end; but it failed completely on its second performance, and was never again played. M. de la Harpe never showed the least gratitude for this instance of friendship; and a little time afterwards I found means to display him rather ludicrously in my *Annals of Virtue*, relative to an old tragedy called *Joan of Naples*, of which I spoke in a note. The whole article, which was very severe on the author of the tragedy applied perfectly to M. de la Harpe; but at the end of it, I gave the name of an author (Magnon) who has really written a bad tragedy under that title: this little piece of ma-

lice had a good deal of effect, as I had said no more than the truth about Magnon and his play. M. de la Harpe, therefore, durst not complain of the note without appearing ridiculous; and the circumstance only rendered him more inveterate against me.

When the eldest of my pupils had attained his twelfth year, as he had previously been but privately christened, he was, agreeably to the etiquette of the princes of the blood, baptized with great ceremony in the chapel of Versailles. It was customary at the baptism of each prince or princess of the blood, for the king to present the governor or governess of the prince or princess with the sum of twelve thousand francs, payable at the royal treasury, to the king's order. The prince had approved of my holding the place of governor, and that I should exercise all his functions, but I could neither enjoy the title nor the rank. I had been once more presented at court, as governess of Mademoiselle d'Orleans; but when I undertook the charge of her brothers, I could not be presented as their *governor*: so that every body thought I should not have the twelve thousand francs which were allowed to the governors at their baptism. It is certain that for my own part I had no wish to have the money, having

never attached the slightest value to it; nevertheless I was anxious to obtain these twelve thousand francs, because it was equally honourable and remarkable to obtain the sum in that capacity. The Duke of Chartres felt no inclination to solicit the favour, and wished to persuade me that such a demand would sound ridiculous; but I would take no denial, and by dint of importunities, I obliged him to ask it of the king, who granted it at once, without any difficulty. I was delighted at receiving that sum, of which I distributed immediately the one-half to the persons under my orders, who had any share in the education of the princes. I received twelve thousand francs in the same capacity, on the baptism of the Duke of Montpensier, which I divided in the same manner; a thing which no governor or governess had done before my time.

About this time the Duke of Orleans died at Saint Assise. The Duke of Chartres then took the name of *Orleans*, and the eldest of my pupils that of *Chartres*. My aunt returned to Paris, and I obtained permission of the Duke of Orleans to carry the prince and Mademoiselle to visit her, though she had never come to see them at Belle Chasse. The Duke of Orleans, in like manner, never came to visit them, nor did he even send

new year's gifts to his grandchildren, while the Duke of Penthièvre sent them constantly charming ones, and came frequently to visit them at Belle Chasse. This prince not only honoured me by several visits, but had also the politeness to signify his intention of paying one to my mother. The Duke of Orleans went to see Madame de Montesson for six days successively, and behaved towards her in the most flattering manner. She received me personally with friendship, and our intimacy lasted from that time up to my departure from France. The king forbade my aunt to wear widow's weeds, or to put her servants in mourning. Upon this she determined to retire into the convent of the Assumption, during the whole year of her widowhood: she never received me but in the parlour, of which she caused the gratings to be gilt—an affectation which was generally ridiculed, and not without reason, for a black grating suited better with her situation than that unprecedented kind of splendour, which was not to be seen in any convent. My aunt had made herself still more ridiculous before the death of the Duke of Orleans; she had caused a comedy of hers to be performed, called the *Countess de Chazelles*; even the title had something ridiculous in it: the piece itself, which was wretched, failed disgracefully in

the third act: and what was worst of all, a great part of the drama was stolen from an infamous work called *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* by M. de Laclos—a book which no woman ought ever to confess having read.

My aunt carried her ambition of being an authoress to excess: she gave M. Lefévre, the author of some tragedies, apartments in her house; she assigned him a pension of six thousand francs, and all this as she said, was done in order that he might give her some literary advice; she then began to write tragedies. People overlooked all these affectations, and all these absurdities: she had an excellent establishment, and more than two hundred thousand francs a year, and her works never excited the envy of any one.

I shall now resume the broken thread of my narrative: M. de Monthion instituted a prize at the academy—a gold medal for that prose work which should have appeared in the course of the year, and should be judged by the Academy *the most useful and best written.* Madame d'Epinay had published five or six years before the first volume of her *Conversations d'Emilie:* the book is written with a great deal of nature, but without elegance or purity, and contains several erroneous notions—for example, the mother in seeing the pupil

stripping the bark from a tree, asks her if she would like to be flayed in the same manner, and endeavours to inspire her with horror at that action, as if it were a cruel one. There are many things in the volume as far from being reasonable, yet nevertheless it is, in general, an agreeable one. Madame d'Epinay wrote a second volume of these *Conversations*, and although I am very much lauded in it under the name of a fairy, I thought it, as it really is, full of errors in the diction, and of vicious and vulgar modes of expression—and besides the ideas in it are all common-place. The same year I published the *Veillées du Château*. M. de Monthion never doubted that I should have the medal, in spite of all the opposition of the Academy, but to his great surprise, and I venture to say to that of every other person, *the prize for the new work published in the course of the year, and esteemed the best written and the most useful* was decreed to the second volume of the *Conversations d'Emilie!* This work, even if it had been faultless, did not qualify its author to stand for the prize, as it was not a *new work*, but only the continuation of a former one. The first edition of the *Veillées du Château* included in the last volume two tales, which have been taken out since and added to my novels, the *Palace of Truth*, and the *Two Repu-*

tations: in the first of these stories the modern philosophy was severely attacked; and in the second I remarked, with great politeness, but in a manner which did not admit of reply, upon the *Tales* miscalled *moral* of M. de Marmontel. I was therefore pretty sure that I should not obtain the medal, but I thought the Academy would not adjudge the prize. The philosophers thought to overwhelm me with grief by giving it to Madame d'Epinay; but acts of injustice so evidently gross, and so judged by the public, are only so many literary titles of honour for the author who is subjected to them. This edition of the *Veillées du Château* was bought up in eight days: and the work was translated in the course of the year into all the European languages. M. Elmsley, a London bookseller, told me he had published, in the course of two years, twenty-two French editions. It is true that in England the largest edition never exceeds one thousand copies;* but in France, each

* It is to be presumed that Madame de Genlis here speaks of *English* editions of foreign works only; even in this she is not quite right, for of popular works in general, larger editions are printed here than in France: if she means to extend the assertion to English editions in general, it is a ludicrous error. *French* editions, indeed, rarely exceed one thousand; and two thousand would be a large impression for France. (*Translator.*)

of my editions extended to three or four thousand, and sometimes to six or seven thousand. Madame d'Epinay was a *philosopher*, and took care not to talk of religion to her Emily.

I have stated that the happiest years of my life were those I passed at Belle Chasse; which is precisely true of the first eight or nine years I lived there. The four or five latter ones, though rendered more brilliant by the superb heritage of the Maréchale d'Etrée, the excellent place which my brother obtained, and the incontestable success of the plan of education which I pursued; these five years, I say, were poisoned to me by the most grievous losses. The first was that of Madame de Puisieux, who died suddenly of apoplexy. I regretted from my soul that beloved benefactress, that second mother, whom I loved equally through inclination and through gratitude. She left me by her will a diamond worth ten thousand francs, as she did to both her nieces; but she distinguished me by the touching title, *the Countess of Genlis, my friend*. I caused a large ring to be made, which I still possess, and which on one side bore her name and a lock of her hair, and on the other these words, "She honoured me with the title of her *friend*." There was a singular *fatality* of apoplexy in the Louvois family; the

great Louvois died of it, as did the Archbishop of Rheims, his brother; M. de Courtanvaux, the Marquis of Souvré, brother of Madame de Puisieux, his son M. de Louvois, Madame de Sailly his daughter, and the Maréchale d'Etrée, daughter of Madame de Puisieux, all died of apoplexy.

I was so shocked and afflicted on hearing of her death, (I had seen her the evening before) that I was seized with a fever, which confined me a whole day to bed. Two days after her death, I went to visit Madame d'Etreé, who received me with a tenderness which she had never before exhibited; and she frankly gave me of her own accord an explanation of this change. She had found a small box containing all the letters I had written to her mother, had read them, and saw that I had constantly employed my influence with Madame de Puisieux, to soften her resentment of the little causes of discontent which the maréchale sometimes gave her, and that I had positively refused the gift she proposed to make me of her pretty house at Etioles. According to my habits, in affliction I multiplied my occupations: I had already taken a master of Spanish, and I added to this the study of the Portuguese, a language which you learn in six weeks when you know

Italian and Spanish. I read the Lusiad, which showed me the strange errors into which M. de Marmontel had fallen in attributing to the author of that fine poem, the absurd reveries which are to be found in the preface of M. de Castera, his translator. He ridiculed these, as being in the poem, in which they are not to be found, so that the criticism being entirely founded on error, is false from beginning to end. In general, the men of letters of the last century knew nothing of the living languages. M. de la Harpe, who has made so many remarks on Shakespeare, was ignorant of English: a fact which I forced him to avow. They also speak of the arts in a wretched manner, for want of having the simplest notions about them.

My work upon religion, which I wrote for the first communion of the eldest of my pupils, completed the degree of horror, and added to the implacable hatred, in which I was held by the philosophers; it is the work entitled, "*Religion considered as the only basis of happiness and true philosophy.*" M. de Buffon has introduced several errors into his works, which refer only to systems of science, but he has generously retracted them. I knew him to have a sincere contempt for the philosophers, for their falsehoods, their unfairness,

and their confessed design of overthrowing religion and corrupting morals. In publishing my work, I destined the entire profits of the first edition for the benefit of the poor. Though I had not publicly announced that determination, it was known, and this no doubt contributed to the rapid sale of the edition: there was not a single copy to be procured in four days after the publication. I sent a copy to M. de Buffon, who wrote me in reply a charming letter, which I showed to M. de Schomberg; and as his friendship for me was much more real than his philosophy, he begged me to lend him that letter, in order to show it to two or three persons. Charmed at the thought that he would read it to d'Alembert, I gave it to him; and he not only showed it, but gave copies of it, and to my great surprise, the letter appeared in print· M. de Buffon behaved admirably on this occasion; when I wished to justify myself to him in the matter, he replied, that he was delighted that his opinions should be known publicly; only that if he had thought the letter would ever appear in print, he would have written it with more care and more at length. In the progress of this work, there happened to me a very striking occurrence which I cannot help relating here: while writing the book, I experienced the greatest misfortune of my

life; my eldest daughter died in childbed at the age of twenty-one. After passing five years in the very highest society, without guide or director, possessing extreme beauty, enchanting talents, and great wit, and without having ever given rise to the slightest imputation upon her behaviour, she was as sincerely beloved as if she had been no more than passable in person, and goodnatured in disposition; along with a charming vivacity she had the prudence of a person of forty. She died as she had lived, with the calmness and piety of an angel; I went to sit with her the three last nights of her existence, and she expired in my arms; an hour and a half before her death she had lost all speech and consciousness, yet she still clasped my hand: some one proposed to administer some drops of ether, but she mechanically recollected that I disliked the smell of it, for she pushed away the spoon, looking at the same time in my face. In spite of my grief, which had a cruel effect on my health, I began again three days after my loss, to give lessons to my pupils. Two days after, M. de Lawoestine brought me a little pocket-book, which she constantly carried in her pocket; there were two or three pages in it of her hand-writing, the two last written only a few days before her unfortunate malady. Here is one ex-

tract which will give the reader some idea of her disposition and of the character of her mind, which was naturally gay. She had drawn a column, at the head of which she had written, "*Account of the infidelities of my husband during the five years of our marriage.*" She counted them year by year; she then put the total, which amounted to twenty-one. After this, she says, "Now let us see mine." She had put a cypher after each line, and the column was summed up with these words, "Total, satisfaction." She was truly attached to her husband. There is in this piece of pleasantry, a grace, and a purity, and a true philosophy, which have something sublime in them. She was regretted in society as I never knew any young person to be regretted. I shall never forget that the king* himself was most deeply affected; he put his hands up to his eyes, saying, "It is most melancholy!" It was of her that the queen said, that she had the face of Venus with the shape of Diana. This expression was a happy one, for it perfectly described her. After her death it was discovered that several men who had never dared to discover their sentiments had been passionately in love with her; some of them fell sick with grief, among others, the Viscount de Gand

* The unfortunate Louis XVI.

and M. de Florian, who had drawn her portrait at length charmingly and truly as the heroine of his poem of Numa. As for me, being unable to find any relief from my affliction but in study, I set about finishing my work upon religion; and in looking to the place where I had left off, I found I had stopped at the title of the chapter, "On Christian resignation."

And this chapter was still to be written! . . . . If there is nothing else to be found in it, there ought to be truth of feeling, for before I began to write, the paper was wet with my tears. At this time I used to write in a little portfolio which I carried always about me, reflections on grief; I often addressed myself to the beloved daughter I had lost; of these I can only recollect the following passage; "That chamber door will no longer cause my heart to leap with joy when it opens—it will be no longer opened by thee! . . . I shall no longer see thy angelic figure cross the room to hasten to meet me! Alas! how can time console me for thy loss? In five years or in ten, thy absence will have been but the longer, it will be but so much the longer time since I saw thee!"

We went to Saint Leu, where I passed a great part of every night walking on the corridor, or looking out of the tall windows by moonlight on the garden where I had seen her run so often. I

spoke aloud to her—I held conversations with her, and on returning to my chamber, I wrote a few lines in my little *souvenir*. I carried this little book abroad with me, and brought it back again with me to France. Casimir, to whom I had given it to read, and who was passionately fond of it, begged me to lend it to him; when he went into England, he entrusted it to Madame de Chimery, who lost it. I regretted it because the sentiments in it were touching; and in these cases, whatever is true bears marks of originality. Grief had so great an effect on my health, that my physicians directed me to go to Spa; but I refused, in order not to be separated from my pupils; upon this the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, (whom I thus name, the grandfather of my pupils being now dead,) determined to accompany me thither with all the children. I was touched, as I ought to have been, by this proof of kindness and friendship.

In going to Spa, we lodged at Terlemont, at the Plantin, a handsome inn; but all the good rooms were occupied. We were dreadfully ill lodged. I slept in a child's cradle, which I found too small to admit Mademoiselle. Our couriers and women had remained on the road . . . . . But the princes, and especially the Duke of Chartres, served us like excellent domestics. The Duke of Chartres, mounted on

ladder, put our room in order, and nailed up coverlids to the windows, which had neither curtains nor shutters. Mademoiselle, Henriette, and Pamela made our beds . . . ! All the children behaved in a charming manner.

This journey to Spa * was very brilliant; I found there again M. de Romansoff, whom we had met with at Venice a few years before, under the care of M. de Grimm. On that occasion we made together a very pleasant excursion on the Brenta. Though he was then but eighteen, he was a very agreeable companion. M. de Grimm related an anecdote of him which deserves repetition. At the commencement of their journey, a valet-de-chambre of M. de Romansoff was suddenly attacked with raving fits of madness, but in these he nevertheless recognized his master, and obeyed his orders. M. de Grimm wished to send him back to Russia, but M. de Romansoff opposed this decidedly. He said that this man had taken care of him during the first years of his life, and that he already discovered equal honesty and attachment to him, and that he would not abandon him, as, in the state in which he was, he preserved over him a sovereign empire; that in short, he could not have the

* July 1787.

cruelty to drive him to despair by separating from him. In fact, M. de Romansoff kept him with him throughout his travels, taking all possible precautions to prevent him from doing harm to any one, attending to him personally, and making him sleep in his own room. At Spa, I asked M. de Romansoff about this person; seven or eight years had passed away; I learned with pleasure that the man was perfectly cured, and that he was still living; and that he was then residing in his own country on a good pension allowed him by his master, to whom he wrote frequently. M. de Romansoff, who had never been in France, spoke and wrote French as if he had lived all his life at Paris. I never knew any one whose conversation was more agreeable; his mind was formed; and he had acquired a great deal of knowledge without losing any of his amiability in company. We one day made a large party to see the Grotto of Rémouchant near Spa, which is full of deep and dangerous holes, which we called horrible precipices. M. de Romansoff was my conductor; and at every step he pretended that it was to his strength and address that I owed *the preservation of my life.* Suddenly the torches of damp straw which lighted our way, went out, and M. de Romansoff, for the hundredth time *my deliverer*, held

me motionless on the *edge of an abyss*, that is to say, over the most terrrible hole we had yet seen. While he uttered the most nonsensical yet piquant things on the danger of my situation, and on the *boundless gratitude*, which I owed him, other torches arrived, and our guides led us out of this perilous cavern. On our return to Spa, M. de Romansoff, who was in the same carriage with me, requested me to compose a story *impromptu*, and to relate it immediately. I then told a very tragical story of a ghost, with which M. de Romansoff was delighted. In order to hear it again, he made up a supper party at Vauxhall, in a private room; and it was agreed that each of us should tell a story by turns. We were eight in number; and of those present, only M. de Romansoff and another person had heard my story: I was requested to tell it again; I had looked for this, and having had two days more to concoct it, the story met with unbounded success. M. de Romansoff made me give him my word of honour that I would make a romance of it, and dedicate it to him. It was the foundation of *Charlemagne, or the Knights of the Swan*, and the first romance I ever published; for *Adèle et Théodore* is not a romance. I began at Bremgarten, and continued it on the highway, in the inns, and in traversing the magnificent forests (since

cut down) of the country of Clèves. I stopped at the ancient castle of Clèves; and there I found traces of the Knights of the Swan. I passed by the convent of Maryinbaum, &c. and finished the romance in the inn of Altona. The honest bookseller, Fauche, offered me, of his own accord, three hundred gold fredericks for it; at this moment I was so much in want of money that I would have given it for fifty. I dedicated it, agreeably to my promise, to M. de Romansoff; but I only put in the dedication the initial letter of his name. I was proscribed, and knowing the inconvenience resulting from party spirit, I feared to compromise him by naming him. The work met, nevertheless, with great success at court; the Empress Catherine appeared charmed with it, and had bracelets made *à la Duchesse de Clèves,* similar to those I have described in the romance; some jewellers coming from Russia, brought several of these into Hamburg, where they sold them. At the same time, there was invented at the court of Berlin, a new quadrille in which all the personages in the *Knights of the Swan* figured with their devices.

At Spa, I again met Madame de Potocka, and her son Count John Potocka, whom, in the course of a series of pleasantries, I finished by calling *my kitten.* We had had a long correspon-

dence together, and at the foot of each of his letters instead of a signature, he always drew a pretty little cat.

We saw, besides, at Spa, a young and charming Spanish woman, the Countess of Rechteren, married to a man who might have been her father, but whom she really loved, as she proved by the attentions she paid him, and by her spotless behaviour; she was at once clever, ingenuous, pretty, and a fine woman; at Spa she occasioned many unhappy attachments; among others, the Duke of L.... a young and handsome nobleman of the court of France, became desperately in love with her. As it was always very difficult to approach her ear, she being always near her husband, he thought he had found a favourable moment one morning at the breakfast at Vauxhall, as Madame de Rechteren was not, on that occasion, seated by her husband; the Duke of L.... and several other gentlemen who had the gallantry to serve *the ladies* had not sat down to table, and the duke placed himself behind Madame de Rechteren; he entered into conversation with her, but in an under tone, and leaning over her he whispered in her ear in a low voice, a formal declaration of love. Madame de Rechteren, after listening quietly to what he was saying, made

this reply: "My lord duke, I do not understand French very well, so that I have not comprehended a word of what you have been saying: but my friend there (so she always styled her husband) is much better acquainted with it than I; go and tell him all these pretty things, and he will explain them all to me very clearly." The duke, instead of following this advice, withdrew precipitately with a visible air of vexation. The piquant answer of Madame de Rechteren made every body comprehend what the Duke of L . . . . had revealed to her with an air of so much mystery.

The unfortunate Princess of Monaco* was also on this excursion. She was very amiable, and I became very intimate with her. I had the pleasure of seeing at Spa the pretty Jeannette, daughter of Madame Aglebert, and formerly the conductress of the blind man.

A few years previous, the King of Sweden, from seeing my piece, *The Blind Man of Spa*,

* The Princess of Monaco left France in the beginning of the revolution, but soon returned. She was arrested twice; the second time she escaped, but her asylum was soon discovered; she was given up to the revolutionary tribunal, and condemned to die. She was advised to plead that she was with child, but as she had been separated from her husband for two years, she preferred death to a confession of infidelity to her husband, and she perished on the scaffold at the age of twenty-six.—*(Note by the Editor.)*

felt curious to see that virtuous family; he gave a dowry to the girl who was afterwards married. This prince did me also the honour to translate into Swedish my piece, called *La Curieuse*, and since that time there has been a drama in imitation of it, which is entitled, I think, *Edward of Scotland*.

I made my pupils give at Spa a grand fête to the Duchess of Orleans; the waters of the Sauvenière having done her much good, her children constructed round that spring a beautiful walk, in a spot which was formerly a wild wood full of rocks and stones. They removed the stones and rocks which were in the way, and marked out the roads; the woods were cleared, and ornamented with seats, bridges were placed over the torrents, and the woods were covered with charming shrubs in flower. At the end of the walk, which was very long, there was a kind of little wood, which had an opening looking out upon a preçipice, remarkable for its height, and for being covered with majestic piles of rock, springs, grass, and trees. Beyond that precipice lay a view of great extent and great beauty. In the wood we raised, upon a plot of turf, an altar to Gratitude of white marble, designed by M. de Myris. On the top of the altar were the words, in large letters, *To Gratitude;* and below was this inscription: " The

waters of the Sauvenière having restored the health of the Duchess of Chartres, her children have embellished the neighbourhood of its springs, and have themselves traced the walks, and cleared the woods with more assiduity than the workmen who laboured under their orders."

Beneath this inscription, was the cypher of the four children. As the inscription declared, the children had laboured at the work with the greatest assiduity, especially the Duke of Chartres and his brothers, who were stronger than Mademoiselle. As they were desirous of giving a surprise to the Duchess of Orleans, they worked in secret, rising at five in the morning, walked two leagues to reach the wood, and worked without ceasing for three hours, and this lasted for three weeks. On the day of the fête, I invited all the prettiest persons at Spa, to come to the fountain at one in the afternoon, dressed in white, with white feathers, nosegays, wreaths of wild flowers, and violet ribbons. I left all the gentlemen on the outside, and disposed all the women in groups within, some walking, some seated, &c. The Duchess of Orleans followed us, and found all the gentlemen outside. The music belonging to Vauxhall, which I had also placed at the entrance, began to play when she appeared, and acquainted me with her

arrival. I went immediately to receive her at the entrance of the walk, followed by her four children. The latter carried hoes, to signify that they had just finished the walk which they had devoted to her; a sentiment which the Duke of Chartres expressed with great grace and effect. After this explanation, the children quitted her, and going by the shortest road, entered the forest where the altar was situated. All the alleys were decorated with garlands of heath, of which the soft violet-coloured blossoms contrasted beautifully with the verdant grass. The ground carpeted with the same flowers, which covered the whole of the wood, the profusion of garlands interwoven with the trees, the rivulets which intersected the green turf, of which some rolling over pebbles and falling from the rocks, formed cascades; about thirty pretty women, all uniformly dressed, and scattered through the walks, and the beauty of the sky formed a scene of which it is difficult to conceive an idea. We led the Duchess of Orleans about for near a quarter of an hour. At the end of this time, the music ceased, and we arrived at the forest of the altar. She there saw standing about the altar her four children, who with Henriette and Pamela formed a charming group. The altar and the wood were all hung

with garlands of flowers, and the children held bouquets in their hands, which they placed on the altar. The Duke of Chartres, seated at the foot of it, held a chisel in his hand, with which he seemed to write on the altar the word *Gratitude*. After having left the duchess time enough to admire the group, the children ran to her, and threw themselves into her arms. Every one present burst into tears, which proves that the most lively emotions are often produced by the most simple means.

It was proposed to us to mount to the top of a high hill, upon which stands the ancient castle of Franchimont, from whence we could discover an enchanting view, the gayest, we were told, about Spa; we were told that several people in debt were imprisoned in this castle; upon this the Duke of Chartres exclaimed, that "while there were prisoners in the castle, the view did not seem to him at all *gay*;" and immediately he proposed to make a subscription among ourselves to release them. I highly approved of the idea, and thanks to the attention and the ardent zeal of the Duke of Chartres, the subscription was soon made up, and the prisoners got out of the castle; afterwards we went to the mountain, and on arriving at the top of it, the Duke of Chartres, first casting his eyes on the prison, which was now empty, and

then turning them to the extensive view around, said with the most touching expression: "*Now*, I confess, that view appears to me as *gay* as it is admirable!"

Among the persons whom I met at Spa, belonging to the best company, I particularly remarked Miss Plunkett, a person full of sensibility; I was fortunate enough to be useful to her afterwards; she accompanied us to Sillery. She married M. de Chastellux, and obtained a situation in the Palais Royal.

The Duke of Liancourt, (now Duke of Larochefoucauld Liancourt,) and the Abbé Delille, were at Spa; we saw them every day. The Duke of Liancourt played off a pleasant trick upon the Abbé Delille; he composed, under the title of *Couplets*, for the birthday of the Duchess of Orleans, a song regular enough, as far as the versification went, but the most insipid thing imaginable, and put at the bottom, "the Abbé Delille." He then caused it to be printed, along with a variety of other news, in a paper, which he called *The Leyden Gazette*, of which he had only six copies struck off, which were handed to us when at breakfast at Vauxhall, with the Abbé Delille, as the genuine *Leyden Gazette*, which went through all Europe. The rage of the Abbé Delille was

indescribable ; he could not bear the thought that any one at Paris should suspect him of being the author of such verses. His vexation went to such a height, that I wished to undeceive him at once ; but I was not allowed to do this, and the author of the joke had the cruelty to let him remain several days in that state of uneasiness.

I met, also, at Spa, the Chevalier de Chastellux, who had fallen in love with an Irish lady,* whom he afterwards married ; the lady had nothing, and he had only a life-rent ; and the chevalier, though he had quarrelled with me at the time of my publication of *Adèle et Théodore,* came to call on me, and to say, that though I had some right to complain of him, he was confident I would not refuse to serve him in an object on which the happiness of his life depended. This method of addressing me has always been sure of success. I performed with the utmost zeal all he desired, and obtained the promise of a place at court for the lady whom he should marry—a thing which was not obtained without difficulty ; for the Duke of Orleans was averse to it, and made great opposition to the proposal. At length, however, I succeeded ; and the chevalier, who took the title of marquis, married Miss Plunkett, to the great displeasure of his family.

* Miss Plunkett, before-mentioned.

I undertook the charge of every thing relative to their marriage, purchases for their outfit, and presentations every where. I introduced her into society, where every one was prejudiced against her. Nevertheless, in spite of all the vexations which Madame de Chastellux has occasioned me, I confess, with my usual impartiality, that she was lively and clever, that she even possessed some excellent qualities; that she was a good mother, and rendered the Chevalier de Chastellux happy during the time of their union. The Marquis of Chastellux was very grateful for all my kindness; but he died a few months after his marriage. Madame de Chastellux was constantly engaged in endeavouring to lose me the friendship of the Duchess of Orleans, in order that she might supplant me in her favour. The revolution furnished her with easy means to accomplish her object.

On our journey, we passed three days at Givet, where M. de Valence gave a charming entertainment to the Duchess of Orleans, at which several pretty verses were sung about her and her children. The next day, M. de Valence gave my pupils, with the aid of his regiment, some military entertainments, equally ingenious and magnificent, such as the attack, defence, and burning of a mock fortress placed on the top of a mountain, &c.

After the fort was taken, the officer who commanded the assailants, came to offer to the Duke of Chartres his *victorious* sword. The Duke of Chartres returned it to him, saying, " It is in too good hands already for me to think of changing its possessor." This obliging speech had so much the more success, as it was evidently not dictated to the prince.

From Givet, the Duke and Duchess of Orleans did me the honour to return to Paris by Sillery, where they remained a fortnight, along with many other persons, whom M. de Sillery invited. He gave splendid entertainments to the Duchess of Orleans; he had already greatly embellished Sillery, where he had realized a beautiful invention on the canals, which are finer at Sillery than elsewhere, as the river flows among them. M. de Genlis had placed in the water as many little islands as I had pupils; all of which were connected by pretty bridges, with a large island which bore my name.

The following year the Duke of Orleans bought the estate of La Motte, near the sea, where we went to pass six months. Every morning there were brought to us all the sea shells, and all the fishes which we wished to see alive. My pupils

there acquired all the local knowledge which could be gathered in such a place.

The Duke of Orleans has been most unjustly accused of avarice; yet he purchased this estate for the sum of two or three hundred thousand francs, solely that his children might acquire a knowledge of shells, fishes and sea-plants, and that they might have a minute acquaintance with vessels. I shall afterwards cite many other traits of the extreme generosity of this prince, who, in this respect, and in many others, has been so cruelly calumniated.

Mademoiselle was so pious, so sensible, and so well grounded in religion, that I made her take her first communion at the age of eleven. A short time previous,* we had all gone together to La Trappe. The princesses of the blood had, in right of their birth, and in quality of descendants of Saint Louis, the right of entering all the convents of men, even the most austere; but up to this time, when they had made use of this privilege, they had either all entered the convent together, or if there were none of the ladies with them, they were accompanied by their fathers or husbands;

* In June, 1788.

so that until this period, no private lady had ever entered the precincts of La Trappe. I insisted upon entering, and I succeeded. I represented, that the governess was inseparable from her pupil, unless she gave her up into the hands of her mother; but that as I was alone with Mademoiselle, it would be, in effect, to refuse her, as I could not consent to be separated from her. The chapter assembled to deliberate on the question, and the result was agreeable to my wishes, I was allowed to enter with the young princess, and I was treated with the utmost politeness. First we heard the reading, which took place in the cloister, where all the fathers were seated; it was a kind of French sermon, of which I remember the following passage: "Fly far from us all ye vain and deceitful pleasures! in this place ye are expiated or despised!" The breathless attention of these religious persons had something very striking and touching in it. After the reading was over, we entered a saloon, where we were received by the old and the actual abbé, who remained with us. In three quarters of an hour, we were led to the choir, which was very handsome. All the fathers sung with the piety of angels, and from time to time prostrated themselves on the ground, remaining there in profound silence until the sound

of a hammer gave them the signal to rise; all this, added to the simple majesty of the church, affected me with an inexpressible emotion. After the service, we went out; and were conducted to the bottom of a large staircase, leading to the cells; there we were told to stop, while the abbé, at the foot of the stairs, holding a branch in his hand, blessed one by one the fathers as they marched by him, each bowing profoundly; they afterwards went up stairs to retire to rest. After this ceremony we were reconducted to the saloon, where we supped, and where we remained an hour in conversation with the fathers. We saw in an adjoining room the portrait of M. de Rancé, a fine portrait painted by Rigaud. M. de Rancé was represented in the act of writing. His features were regular, and his physiognomy clever and intelligent; he resembled very strikingly M. de Sillery,* except in not having so fine a complexion. I should never have imagined the founder of La Trappe to have possessed such a face. In the apartment of the Duke of Penthièvre was still to be found a good picture brought by M. de Rancé from Rome, representing the death of Saint Bernard.

* M. de Genlis was then Marquis of Sillery.—(*Note by the Author.*)

The day following, after mass, we went to the refectory to see the fathers dine. There was no cloth on the table, but each had a towel; their dishes were of pewter, and their spoons and forks of box-wood; to each was served a bowl of soup, a plate of vegetables, two or three raw potatoes, a large piece of good bread, a jug of water and another of beer. A reader seated on an elevated chair read to them during the repast. Afterwards, the reader, who was one of the fathers, dined with the domestics; each of the fathers was reader in turn; the fathers were served by others of the fathers, who dined after them, as did the reader. The brothers, who performed the menial offices of the convent, dined at the same time in an adjoining hall, which was only separated from the other by an arcade without a door, which allowed a complete view of the hall of the fathers; these were served by their own brethren.

Here let me be allowed to remark, that the establishment of converse brothers,* which seems so contrary to Christian humility in all cases, is especially so among the austere orders. For example, at La Trappe, where the duties were equally divided amongst all the individuals of the house

* This is the title given to the brethren who act as servants in the convents.—(*Translator.*)

the converse brothers did not serve the fathers; from whence, then, came the distinction of hall and of name? It was not because the brethren were not priests; for the greater part of the fathers did not bear that character. Reason approves of equality —religion commands it; it seemed a strange contradiction to see a monk one moment prostrated in the dust, and the next refusing to eat his brown bread and beans by the side of some of his brethren as virtuous and as pious as he. This institution is very old; the *lay brothers* were established by Saint Gualbert in 1072, but without these haughty distinctions; I do not know the name of him who reduced them to the quality of valets, but it is to be presumed that it was some *gentleman* monk.

From the refectory we went to the library, and from thence to the chapel, which contains the tomb of M. de Rancé. The cells were very small; they contained a matrass, a wooden table and a crucifix. We witnessed the fathers working in the garden. We visited the repository for drugs, which is extensive and well filled; and there was near it a pretty botanic garden containing the usual plants.

I shall now mention all I gathered from the conversation of the fathers. The history of the

Count de Cominges is a fable, as are also the following things; that they are occupied daily in digging their own graves; that they raise and pull down again mountains in order to keep themselves employed; that they say to each other when they meet, "we must die;" that they wear on their head an instrument covered with sharp points, &c. All these things are completely false. They keep continual fasts; they never eat fish, sugar, eggs, butter, or oil, except a little of the latter, which they are allowed for their salads. They are allowed to use vinegar, and also milk, but the latter is forbidden them during Lent; they never drink wine, but on journeys; and when absent from La Trappe, they are permitted to drink it, and to eat fish and butter; they are allowed to leave La Trappe on the affairs of the convent. Their dress, like that of the Chartreux, is white; they shave their heads and their beards, and they have a hood which they wear at pleasure. They sleep always in their clothes; they wear a woollen shirt, but no hair-cloth; all mortifications of this description are forbidden by their rules. Nobody can be admitted among them till the age of twenty; that is to say, admitted to the noviciate, which lasts a year. Only the infirm employ themselves in making little articles, such as chaplets or box-wood

spoons, &c.; even in winter they work at their gardens, and afterwards do the work of the house, shell peas, prepare vegetables, collect and preserve seeds, &c. This work is divided among them all. Counting the fathers and the converse brothers, there are in all about one hundred and twenty persons in the convent. Among sixty fathers, there were only eighteen priests; the others, though bound by the same irrevocable vows, neither said mass, nor counted themselves in holy orders, through a sentiment of humility; thinking themselves neither good nor virtuous enough to venture to celebrate the sacred mysteries of religion. The abbé was elected for life, and named by the court, and by the votes of the fathers; the votes were given by way of ballot, and were forwarded, sealed up, to the court. There were three fathers appointed to receive the strangers and the poor who arrived. From their establishment and the legacies of pious persons, they could afford to give all poor travellers hospitality for three days. When the apartments in the convent were full they paid their expenses at the inn; and if, during these three days, any of the poor travellers fell sick, they took care of them till their health was perfectly recovered; their surgeon visited them and furnished them with drugs from the repository belonging to the house; the fathers went also

to visit them, dressed their wounds, &c. If the poor travellers required money to pursue their journey, the fathers gave them what was necessary to carry them to the place where they wished to go. There was not a day on which there did not pass many poor travellers, and among others a great many soldiers. It has often happened that the gratitude and admiration of those they have succoured, have fixed the persons who were the objects of their charity among them. In short, whoever wishes to see virtue in all its perfection, will only see it there, under, perhaps, too severe a form, but so true, and so sublime, that it is not wonderful that persons of enthusiastic feelings, should be found willing to devote themselves to such a state. Besides these charities, they aided and took care of all the poor of the neighbourhood for many leagues round. I questioned several of the peasantry, who spoke to me of the fathers with the respect and veneration which we should have for angels who deigned to manifest themselves to us. What private individuals, with the same revenues, could do so much good at once by their example and their charities? Where shall we find such virtues, uninspired by religion? They never received into their community any widowers whose children were not established in the world, of whatever

age the children might be, unless they had some occupation which insured them subsistence; they thought that a father in such a case had no right to dispose of his liberty, and that he owed his life to his children. When they have once professed, they cease to hold communication by letters with any person whatever. They receive no visits from any of their relations except their father and mother, and even this must be rarely. They are expressly forbidden to discover a shadow of preference for any one of their brethren, they being obliged to love all alike. If any one of them discovered that one of his brethren seemed to have a particular friendship for him, he was obliged, when they were all assembled, to ask permission to speak, and to accuse him of it publicly. In this case, the superiors imposed a penance on the accused, who was never to endeavour to excuse or justify himself, even if he should have been wrongfully accused. He was supposed to think that when his brother accused him he must have given room for the accusation in some way which he has forgotten; and besides in any case he ought to sacrifice his self-love without hesitation to the obedience he owes to the rules of La Trappe. In this case, and in every other, when a brother sees any other trangress, in whatever way it may be,

he is bound to accuse him publicly, as I have stated, and the accused is always to remain silent, and submit with resignation to the penance imposed; if there escaped from his lips a single word in his own defence all the brethren would prostrate themselves on the ground and entreat God to pardon his pride; but this is a thing which rarely happens, except in the case of novices, and those who have but recently taken the vows, and even in these instances it occurs but seldom. It was brother Prosper, a young man of twenty-eight who had been eight years at La Trappe, who acquainted me with these things.

This brother Prosper had a charming physiognomy, and was remarkable for candour and talent. I asked him to tell me frankly, whether among his brethren he did not know some one at the bottom of his heart, who had more friendship for him than the others. "One only?" replied he, "no, truly; I could more readily name a dozen than one." This was a charming answer, and proves what a tender union reigned among them. Besides he told me, that his remarks upon that dozen were not worthy of being made the ground of an accusation, because they were founded upon movements which were altogether involuntary on their parts; "For example," said he, "we know those

who love us most by a number of things which are done mechanically; in our labours we ought all zealously to assist each other; if one of us is too heavily loaded, or falls, &c. we ought to fly to his aid; but in such a case there are always twelve or fifteen brethren who come faster than the rest, and it is by these accidents often repeated, that we find out those who love us best. But God does not condemn these natural inclinations, he does not disapprove of our loving best at the bottom of our hearts, those who seem to us the most virtuous, provided we do not display those feelings so as to wound others, by showing them our preferences and private attachments, which would then be heavy offences against the general charity which we are bound to bear to all, and which would tend to injure the union which ought to exist among us."

When a brother who is sick is at the last extremity, he is told that he is to receive extreme unction; he is then carried to the church, where it is always administered; he is then carried back to his bed. When his last moments approach, there is a bell rung which announces to all the convent that one of the brethren is in the agonies of death; all the rest then assemble round the bed of the dying man, who is placed upon ashes, and

prayers are said aloud for him. This description will make the worldly shudder; yet it must be allowed that at La Trappe the preparations for death and the religious solemnities which accompany it are equally august and consoling, and are only regarded as the harbingers of triumph and of supreme happiness. "The frugal and laborious life which we lead," said Father Theodore to us, "exempts us from violent and putrid diseases. I have never witnessed any epidemics here, even while they were raging in the country. We scarcely know any other diseases than those of the chest, occasioned by our singing in the church, and by the rule which obliges us to rise in the night. Those whose constitutions enable them to brave this disorder, and who have passed the age of thirty, live here longer than elsewhere; our old age is healthy and vigorous, and in general we die in the possession of all our faculties. In the fifty years I have passed here, I do not know an instance of any of our brethren dying who did not enjoy all his faculties and his reason. As we live but to die in security, that moment comes invested by no terrors; on the contrary, when we attend any of our brethren in death, we all envy the crown he is about to receive, and we wish ourselves in his place. It is not that we hate life;

we think ourselves as happy as mortals can be upon this earth, but we experience in our last moments all the joy which the sweetest and highest hopes can bestow. I have never known a brother who did not meet the news of his approaching death, not only without fear, but with gladness; I have even seen some whom the news reanimated, and whose strength has been so renewed by the intelligence, that their days have been prolonged in a miraculous manner, and almost all have displayed in their last moments a vivacity, a warmth, and an eloquence, which seemed supernatural. It is not long since a brother who was told that he had but one day to live, felt himself so reanimated by the news, that he said he found himself strong enough to walk to the church to receive extreme unction without being carried thither. In fact, though up to that moment he had been extremely weak, he rose, walked from his room, descended the stairs, went to the church, returned thence, and to the great surprise of the surgeon, lived two months longer."

The same Father Theodore who told us this was the former abbé: he had lived in society before embracing that vocation, and was thirty when he entered La Trappe: he was at this time more than

eighty, was very stout, had all his teeth, a very fine head, and a freshness of complexion quite astonishing: his cheeks were of the finest red I have ever seen. He had a great deal of talent, extraordinary politeness, and an astonishing memory; he had not forgotten a word of what he had read before entering La Trappe. He quoted to me many passages from history, and from La Bruyère, whom he knew by heart: and he related to us several interesting narratives, among others the following: A few years ago, a young man of good birth, rich, and handsome, the only son of a tender mother, came here, induced by a vocation of which he had felt the influence from his earliest years, to be admitted with the consent of his mother, to perform his noviciate. The year of the noviciate was not quite finished when his mother, repenting of the consent he had extorted from her, arrived suddenly at La Trappe; she asked for her son, who came to her accompanied by Father Theodore. The conversation was very long, at least on the part of the mother, who conjured her son to return with her, assuring him that she desired this principally for his own benefit. The latter listened in silence, without interrupting her, and when she had finished said, " Mother, will you deign to reply to a question which I am about to put to you?

Suppose I went to fix myself far from you in a foreign country, where it would be impossible for you to come: suppose I should there have acquired a large fortune, a great establishment, and brilliant honours, and that I was not allowed to return to you without renouncing all these advantages, would you require the sacrifice at my hands?" "No, certainly," said his mother, "I only desire your happiness." "Well then, mother," replied the son, "I am that happy man; or rather I am a thousand times happier than I could be rendered by the possession of all the honours and riches of the universe: my happiness, besides, is so much the greater, because all the inconstancy of fortune can never deprive me of it; and death, so far from putting an end to it will make it supreme and eternal: behold then, the extent of the sacrifice you demand!" At these words the mother rose up, embraced her son with tears, and departed. I might cite many more instances of the same kind which were told me by Father Theodore, of the then abbé, and of the three brothers who took charge of travellers. These five monks, with whom I had so many conversations, were all equally obliging: they answered frankly all my questions; but as soon as I ceased to speak, they seemed to commune with

their own hearts, bent down their eyes and heads, and fell into such a state of profound meditation, that I am persuaded they believed themselves alone with the Deity; this was without any affectation, and with an air of nature which was very striking. As soon as you spoke to them, they started from their reverie, and assumed an obliging and cheerful aspect, which lasted as long as you questioned them. They observed among themselves, except in the case of the superiors and the three monks, an eternal silence; but they were allowed at certain hours, to speak to the superiors when they had any demands to make: at other times and at their labour, they expressed themselves only by signs. There were there some monks who had not opened their lips for many years but to confess themselves, to read, and to sing the praises of God. The three monks observed, like the rest, the law of silence within the house, and never spoke but to strangers.

There was not a single looking-glass at La Trappe, either in the interior, or exterior apartments of the convent; many of the brethren had absolutely forgotten their own faces. As they worked not only in their gardens, but out of doors, the doors on the side of the garden were always wide open, so that if a monk wished to escape, he

might easily do it: in this case, no one would have tried to prevent him, still less to pursue or bring him back when his flight was discovered; on the contrary, they would all be delighted to have got rid of a bad brother: but at the same time their rules oblige them to receive him if he returns; and ordain him, as a penance, to remain shut up for as long a period as he has been absent, and to live upon bread and water. Nevertheless, the abbé has the right of shortening, as much as he chooses, the time of expiation, which he always does if the culprit shows signs of repentance: in this case, though the culprit's absence may have lasted ten years, he is never confined more than one. When any one presents himself to be received, all the austerities are detailed to him in the most circumstantial manner; he is besides reminded that however robust his constitution may be, it is very probable that it may not be proof against them, and that he will sink under them in the course of two or three years: and it is after all this that he is received at La Trappe. They never receive any but tall, strong, and healthy men; which led me to be much struck with the appearance of these monks, who are generally of great size. They had among them a very able surgeon, who was still young, who had fixed himself at La

Trappe through affection to the fathers; he lived with them on their diet, and attended all their services when his occupations allowed him; he practised medicine gratuitously for the poor, and often walked ten or twelve leagues to attend them. He told us that it was impossible to live among these fathers without feeling a desire to imitate them, and that he would not quit them if any one were to offer him all the wealth of the world. These pious persons had all the charity which characterizes true virtue: they told me that a woman disguised as a man, came thither one day with her husband, but that she saw nothing, for they recognized her sex as soon as she appeared, and obliged her to leave the convent. I exclaimed against this profanation, which is a case rendering the person liable to excommunication, but they very kindly excused her, saying that she was very young, and that she could not have felt the impropriety of her action; and that as for her husband, they could easily conceive that he might have the weakness to consent to the impropriety, in favour of the woman he loved.

Travellers have gone very far to study mankind, and to endeavour to discover the effects of examples, institutions, laws, governments, &c. upon the mind; here we found among ourselves laws

far more austere than those of the ancient Spartans; virtues infinitely more sublime than those of the sages of antiquity so famed and so extolled; here was a little republic in which all the dangerous passions were subdued, and where all the virtues were carried to a height of perfection which seems above human nature. Is this, then, a picture unworthy the contemplation of a true philosopher? Should we quit this venerable abode with the question—*Are these men fools?* Before deciding this, begin by proving yourself wise; prove to me at least that you are consistent; that you have principles of some kind or another, and that you regulate your manners by them. You believe that we ought to yield to the inclinations with which nature has endowed us, that it is thus only we can be happy; wherefore then do you constantly complain? Why does happiness ever fly from you, and elude your grasp? Why is the repose of the soul to you but a dream?

But it will be said—Of what use are all these absurd austerities? Then cease to admire the disciples of Pythagoras who passed seven years without speaking;* cease to admire the sobriety of Diogenes and other philosophers, who lived only upon herbs; cease to admire the patience of

* This was one of their trials. (*Author.*)

Epictetus and of Socrates, their patience, and their contempt for wealth and dignities! . . . Is it only in past ages and among heathens that these virtues have acquired their power of touching you? Tradition may have exaggerated in these instances, and it tells us that these men had their errors and their weaknesses; but you cannot doubt in the case of men who are so near your own time: and if you find any singularity in the life of a monk of La Trappe, at least you will find none of the vices which are the reproach of the Pagan philosophers. But, it will be repeated, to what purpose are these woollen shirts, these hard mattrasses, that exclusion of every thing convenient or agreeable? To what purpose? to give to the poor the money which would be expended in dresses of silk, in soft beds, in handsome furniture, in delicate viands! Do you ask why they pass a part of the day in cultivating the fields? To give an excellent example to the peasants around them, and to labour in a useful pursuit. Who among them would not blush to be a sluggard and an idler? But why pass so many hours in a church? Why do you pass so many years at Versailles,* where you languish in ennui? in the hope always uncertain, and often disappointed, of obtaining . . . .

* This was written in 1790.

what? an empty title, a ribbon, or a seat! It is not such trifles as these which attract these men to their church and retain them there; it is not the hope, but the certainty of obtaining, not fragile and perishable advantages, but eternal felicity. Fancy, if you will, that their hope is unfounded; what is that to them, when they themselves are persuaded of its solidity? The reward which they look forward to is greater than that which you seek; they have far greater pleasure in singing the praises of God, than you have in paying your court to your king: rivals for power and your own doubts torment you; but they have no rivals to dread, they are certain of the reward of their labours. You aspire, and they expect: think how much happier they are in their churches than you at the *Œil de Bœuf*. Thus, even if their belief were founded on an illusion, you ought not to style them *fools*, since they are beneficent, virtuous, useful, and happy; and if their belief is well-founded, what name do they deserve, and what title should be yours? What will be your lot in eternity, contrasted with theirs?

From La Trappe we went to Conches. There we went to church, where I met with an awkward incident. The Curé was conducting the princess through the choir; afterwards he went up to the

altar, and having said some prayers, he came up to me and said in a low voice, "Madame, will you allow me to have the *sign* of Mademoiselle?" The sound of the phrase occasioned me some surprise; but after a little reflection, I guessed that he wished to have the signature of Mademoiselle, who accordingly wrote her name on the registers.*

From Conches we went to Navarre. A lady at Conches, who wished to see the princes at supper, had given us the most splendid description of the beauties of Navarre, adding, that the *most charming* of all was the figure of a peasant fishing and his wife, made of coloured stucco: she assured us that these figures were so natural, that one day, a man on the other side of the water reprimanded the man for catching the duke's fine carp; and that seeing the fisherman persist, he threw a large stone at him, which broke one of his arms. The lady assured us that it cost the duke *considerable sums* to have a new arm made for that *fine coloured statue.* Navarre is five leagues from Conches. I think the gardens of Navarre were at that period the finest

* It is impossible to render this blunder into English. The sound of the word *sein*, bosom, and that of *seing*, which is vulgarly used for signature, are the same; so that when the worthy curate asked for the signature of Mademoiselle, it seemed as if he asked to touch her bosom. (*Translator.*)

in France beyond comparison; they appeared to me infinitely preferable to those of Chantilly; they were immense, and joined a vast and beautiful forest. The fountains were admirable; a fine and broad river traversed the gardens, and formed rivulets and cascades, which fell night and day at all seasons. The wonderful beauty of the shady walks and the waters, the majestic forest which bounded the gardens on all sides and overlooked them, the profusion of flowers, the enormous quantity of trees and rare plants, the magnificence of the buildings, the variety of the views, the excellent taste and noble effect which reigned in the whole plan and arrangement, and the vast extent of these gardens, rendered this spot well worthy of exciting the curiosity of foreigners, and of all lovers of art. On entering this enchanting spot we were struck with a reflection which offered a singular contrast to our minds: we thought it singular to find ourselves in the *Temple of Love*, after having been the evening before, at that very hour, in the narrow cells of the fathers of La Trappe. In these delicious gardens there are many things in bad taste; but these were slight defects among beauties without number, and of the highest kind. For example, the grotto was but a vast mass, very heavy, and of a villainous shape, which was the

more unlucky, as it was placed very conspicuously and in a ravishing situation: I should have preferred in place of that horrid rock, a fine Temple to Glory, in which should have been hung, as its chief ornament, the sword of M. de Turenne, suspended from the vault: I should have wished the statue of that great man to ornament the back part of the Temple, and bas-reliefs around should have represented his victories. In England, all the buildings at Blenheim are monuments to commemorate the exploits of the Duke of Marlborough: the gardens of Navarre, as beautiful as those of Blenheim, might then have possessed the noble quality of recalling at each step the memory of a hero, the recollections of our soldiers, and of the glorious days of France. In place of this, there was erected in the gardens a little tomb of turf devoted to the war-horse of M. de Turenne. Over that paltry monument stands a small bronze figure of *La Pie*, that celebrated animal; at the four corners of the tomb are porphyry urns; and the whole resembled, as Pamela observed, chimney ornaments. The woman and the fisherman, in spite of the great admiration the lady of Conches had expressed for them, gave us no higher idea of the garden ornaments. Every one was expressly forbidden to gather flowers in the gardens, or to

kill any game or birds; so that the birds were tamer and more numerous here than elsewhere, and the garden was remarkably fresh and brilliant. I have never seen so many roses and flowers, or heard the songs and warblings of so many birds, and the murmurs of so many torrents and cascades.

In the month of August following, we made an excursion to Saint Valery, five leagues from La Motte. This estate belonged to the Duke of Orleans, and is situated in Normandy, near the town of Eu, on the borders of the sea. After having dined in an inn on the sea shore, there was a vessel towed up to us which had not yet been named. It was wished that the Duke of Chartres should give it his own name, and that he should stand godfather to it at once, to which I consented with so much the more pleasure, as this was a ceremony I had never yet seen. There stood on the quarter deck a table covered with a cloth fringed with lace, and on the table were a vessel of holy water and two plates containing salt and corn. The Duke of Chartres and Mademoiselle were the godfather and godmother. The Curé addressed to them a touching discourse, after which the priests sung prayers. Afterwards, the Curé blessed the vessel. He then went round it,

strewing salt and corn, as the symbols of plenty. It seems to me that this benediction of a vessel about to depart on a long and perilous voyage, is a fine subject for a discourse intended for a young prince. The persons on board explained to my pupils all the details relative to the management of a vessel. We also visited the dock, where we saw two vessels building.

We went to visit a singular village called Cayen, three short leagues from Lamothe. It stands on the sea shore, and consists of about eight hundred houses. The shore is in this spot very high, and is formed of sand exceedingly fine, which the wind carries thither. It hence happens that the wind, driving this sand from the rocky shore to a great distance, it wholly covers not only all the space occupied by the village, but a great extent of country beyond it; so that in walking over this melancholy spot, you sink in the sand up to the ankle; and throughout all this space, neither tree, bush, nor a blade of moss of grass can grow. You fancy yourself transported to the dry and burning sands of Africa; and when the wind is high, as it often happens on the sea shore, the sand rises in the air in thick clouds, and entirely covers that unfortunate village. But their fishery, and the subsistence it affords them, induce the

miserable inhabitants to remain here in spite of so many calamities, and their privation from verdure, fruits, vegetables, fresh water, and all that nature offers elsewhere to the poorest peasant. Their situation appeared to us the more frightful, from this sandy desert being contrasted with cultivated fields and green meadows lying at the distance of five hundred feet from them; affording objects of comparison very distressing to them. I have never seen any thing so melancholy as the appearance of this village. On one side, it is bounded by the vast extent of ocean; and on the other by a great plain of white sand, over which are scattered the wretched huts of the fishermen; not a blade of verdure; a burning sun reflected upon a blazing sand, the air clouded and dimmed by eternal dust, and the melancholy moaning of the waves, all concur to render this village the most hideous abode in the universe. Nevertheless, people live and remain there, and the population is even very considerable; there are many children. How great, then, is the power of habit and of attachment to existence! These fishermen are here sure of subsistence; and they consent to suffer all other evils on condition of being without uneasiness as to the means of prolonging that melancholy existence. What do I say? Perhaps the greater part

of these persons now the objects of our pity, prefer the barren soil which gave them birth to the fertile fields of their neighbours; for, as a well-known poet says:

> E instinto di natura
> L'amor del patrio nido.*

From Lamothe we went to Havre de Grace, where we visited the arsenals, and afterwards the mole. We there saw a horrible monument of the cupidity and injustice of men; this was a very large and bulky vessel, a *slave* ship, built for the purpose of carrying on the trade in negroes; it was very clumsy, being full of prisons for holding the unhappy Africans.

From Havre we went to Pontorson, where we changed horses to proceed to Saint Michel. This place is only three leagues off; but for more than a league, the roads were excessively bad. We were obliged to walk the greater part of the way. To reach Mount Saint Michel, at certain periods, and indeed generally, you must seize the time of ebb, when the sea is retreating from the shore; but at the time we were on our route, the sea had retired for some hours. We arrived when the

* Love of the paternal nest is an instinct of nature.

night was set in; it was a very striking spectacle to approach that fort, in the middle of the night, over the sandy and naked beach, accompanied by guides bearing torches, and uttering fearful cries, to keep us from falling into the deep and dangerous holes, which lay so thick on our road, that we were forced to make a hundred windings to avoid them. We saw quite close to us the fort, which was illuminated, in expectation of the princes; we fancied we had reached it, and were again disappointed by some new turning. We heard a dull sound of bells, which were pealing in honour of the princes; and their sad melody contributed to heighten the melancholy impression which all these new objects produced upon us. It may well be said of this castle that it is situated

> Sur un rocher désert, l'effroi de la nature,
> Dont l'aride sommet semble toucher aux cieux;

for in reality its height is prodigious, it is impossible to conceive an idea of it. Its appearance is very imposing; its towers, its fortifications, and its Gothic architecture render it very venerable. We first entered a citadel, where the people of the place dressed as soldiers, and bearing guns, awaited my pupils. There were no troops sent to that fortress

but in time of war; but in peace, it was the prior who was *commandant* of the fort. After passing the citadel, we entered the town, which was very little and very poor; it is merely a long and very narrow street, which is all full of mountings and turnings, and which you cannot traverse but on foot. Every individual had lighted up his house, and was standing at his door. After having climbed up the street for half an hour, escorted by all the monks, and the people bearing lanterns, we quitted the town, and got to some stairs very lofty and difficult to mount, all covered with moss and brambles; we had about four hundred steps to ascend. From time to time we reached resting-places, which consisted of landing-places all covered with grass and briars. This climbing is the most fatiguing operation that can be imagined; we were all perspiring, though the weather was not at all warm. At length we arrived at a vast church, of which the choir was very noble and handsome; we were now in the convent. After traversing the church, we had to mount another stair leading to the apartments, which were lofty and clean. Above the apartments were four hundred steps more, leading to a Belvedere placed on the summit of the fort. The air there is very sharp but healthy; you drank cistern-water, which

was not disagreeable to the taste. The winter there is extremely severe, and begins in Autumn; and the weather is never very warm. Some of the houses in the town have little gardens, and a few of the inhabitants have cows; but the monks were obliged to procure their provisions elsewhere, even their bread, as, on account of the dearness of wood, none was baked at Saint Michel; it was all brought from Pontorson. There are no fish on that coast, except rarely, and by chance; so that living in the midst of the sea, as it were, the inhabitants are obliged to buy fish. The monks had, at a league and a half from the fort, a country-house, with a superb garden, which furnished them with vegetables. There were twelve monks and they received no novices. It appeared to me that they endeavoured in general, as much as they could, to alleviate the sufferings of the prisoners. They assured us that they never confined any one there but by the king's positive and special orders, and that very often, they took their prisoners to walk in the neighbourhood.

I interrogated them about the famous *iron cage*, they told me it was not of iron but of wood, framed of enormous logs, between which were interstices of the width of three or four finger breadths. It was about fifteen years since, any prisoners had

been confined there wholly, but they still put in those who were obstreperous, for twenty-four hours, or two days, though his place was horribly damp and unwholesome, and though there was another prison as strong, but less unhealthy. I expressed my surprise at this, and the prior in answer assured me that it was his intention at some future time to destroy this monument of cruelty. Upon this Mademoiselle and her brothers cried out, that they would be delighted to see it destroyed in their presence. The prior said that he was at liberty to destroy it, for that Monsigneur the Count d'Artois,* who had visited Mount Saint Michel a few months before us, had positively commanded its demolition; the prior added, that several reasons had obliged him to defer it, but that he would give the princes the satisfaction they desired the next morning, and that this would be assuredly the finest entertainment he could give them. I occupied the chamber where the Abbé Sabatier had slept, when he was confined in that prison for so noble a cause.† The

* Now king Charles X.—(*Author.*)

† For having spoken in the parliament with great force against abuses of the grossest description.—(*Note by the Author.*)

monks never spoke of him without emotion and enthusiasm.

A few hours before our departure from Saint Michel, the prior, followed by the monks, two carpenters, one of the Swisses of the Castle and the greater part of the prisoners (who, at our request, were allowed to be present) accompanied us to the spot containing this horrible cage. In order to reach it, we were obliged to traverse caverns so dark, that we had to use lighted flambeaux; and after having descended many steps, we reached a horrible cavern, where stood this abominable cage, which was extremely small and placed on ground so damp, that you saw the water running under it. I entered with a sentiment of horror and indignation, mingled with the pleasant feeling, that at least, thanks to my pupils, no unfortunate person would ever have to reflect with bitterness within its walls on his own misfortunes and the cruelty of men. The Duke of Chartres, with the most touching expression, and with a force beyond his years, gave the first blow with his axe to the cage, after which the carpenters cut down the door, and removed some of the wood. I have never witnessed any thing so touching as the transports, the acclamations, and the applauses of the prisoners during

this demolition. In the midst of the tumult I was struck with the melancholy and miserable looks of the Swiss, who regarded the operation with the greatest signs of grief. I mentioned this to the prior, who told me that the Swiss regretted the destruction of the cage, because he made money by showing it to strangers. The Duke of Chartres gave ten louis to the Swiss, saying, that for the future instead of showing the cage to travellers, he would have to point out to them the place where it once stood, and that surely *that* view would be much more agreeable to them.

After the mass, we inspected all the establishment: we saw an enormous wheel, by means of which, with cables, they raised to the windows of the castle, all the bulky kinds of provisions to be consumed in it. The provisions were fixed to a pulley by ropes, which passed over a large wheel, placed in the inside of the fort at an open window, and the wheel when turned round, raised up whatever was fastened to the cable. From thence we went to walk on the terraces or parapets, which are excessively high. From this spot the view around is admirable; you see mount Tomblaine, which is higher than mount Saint Michel, and uninhabited. It is situated at three quarters of a league from Saint Michel, which

seems incredible; for as it is placed in the sea as well as the other mount, and you do not see around you any objects to enable you to judge of its size, it appeared to us extremely small, though we were but a hundred feet from it. Afterwards we saw what is called the Hall of the Knights, which is large and handsome, and supported by pillars. It takes its name from the custom which the knights of Saint Michel had of going to this mountain. The library was very indifferent, which somewhat grieved me; when I reflected how useful and even necessary was a good collection of books for the prisoners.

Superstitious tradition relates, that Saint Michael formerly performed miracles upon this mountain, then inhabited by hermits; that afterwards the saint commanded them to build upon it, and that the mountain acquired the name of Mount of the Tomb, on account of its form. The ancient dukes of Normandy and other princes made pilgrimages to this mountain, and presents which we saw in the treasury of the church. Pilgrimages were still made to it, and we were loaded with medals and little silver shells, such as are given to pilgrims. We obtained for several prisoners a privilege which they ardently desired; that of being allowed to follow us to the foot of the castle.

There was one of these who had been confined for fifteen months, and who till that time had been deprived of the liberty of moving from the upper part of the fort; when he found himself out of the convent, and on the little landing-place, but especially when he saw the grass which covered the steps of the staircase, he discovered emotions of mingled joy and tenderness which it is impossible to describe; he gave me his arm, and at every step we advanced, he cried out with transport, "O what joy it is to walk once more on the grass!" I ought here to mention that on our arrival at Paris we made many fruitless endeavours to obtain his liberty. The Duke of Chartres however had the happiness of obtaining the enlargement of one of these prisoners, and to contribute to the freedom of another.

I was delighted to have seen this spot at once so melancholy and so strange; this amphibious castle, of which the possession is by turns rejected both by land and sea; for the mountain is one part of the day a solitary island in the midst of the sea, and at another it is placed on a vast plain of arid sand.

On quitting mount Saint Michel, we went to Saint Malo, where we saw a striking instance

of what activity united to industry can perform. There lived in that town fifteen years before, a merchant named Dubois, who lost all he had; having no longer any kind of property, he bethought him of going to the Indies, when a vessel which was supposed to have been lost came into port. Dubois had a share in that vessel which had gained large sums, and brought him six hundred thousand francs; with that sum, he engaged in other speculations which were successful. He then obtained permission to construct a little harbour at his own expence a short league from Saint Malo, at a place called Montmarin. The harbour was finished, and was exactly that of Brest in miniature. Dubois built there a pretty château where he lived, and set about constructing vessels for sale; so that this little portion of land, gained by industry and labour, had become, since it was the property of Dubois, a kind of republic founded and governed by himself. There was at Montmarin a great number of workmen, because every thing was made there, cords, cables, sails, carpentry, &c. Dubois lent money to the shipowners; but in such cases he exacted as security vessels which he put into his harbour. He had six of this kind at that time, all bearing the flags

of different nations. This singular man was very hospitable, and received very kindly all foreigners and persons who came to visit him.

For a long period the revolution had been preparing, and all respect for the monarchy was now destroyed; it was become the fashion to defy the court in every thing, and to ridicule the monarchy. No one went to Versailles to pay his court, but with unwillingness and complaints; every one said, that nothing was so tiresome as Versailles and the court, and every thing the court approved, was disapproved by the public; even the theatrical pieces applauded at Versailles, were hissed at Paris. A disgraced minister was sure of the public favour, and if he was exiled, every one went eagerly to visit him, not through real greatness of soul, but merely to have the pleasure of blackening and condemning all that the court did. The finances were in very bad condition; and in order to remedy them it was thought advisable to assemble the states-general. There is nothing so injudicious as asking at once for advice and money, for you always receive the latter accompanied with very hard conditions. Some persons foresaw the storms and troubles that followed, but in general, the public security went the length of madness. The Duke of Orleans and M. de

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S S...

Lauzun were one night at my house; (the assembly of the notables was already met,) I said that I hoped that these assemblies would reform many abuses; the Duke of Orleans replied, and maintained that they would not even suppress the *lettres de cachet*; M. de Lauzun and I maintained the contrary; a bet was made between the Duke of Orleans and M. de Lauzun; they wrote it down, and gave it to me to keep, which I did for more than five years. The bet was fifty louis. The Duke of Orleans maintained, as I have already mentioned, against the opinion of M. de Lauzun, that the assembling of the state would not produce the reformation of any abuses, not even that of the *lettres de cachet*. I showed the paper successively to more than fifty persons, and the opinion of the Duke of Orleans was precisely that of almost all the people of quality. A revolution was regarded as an impossible event. This security was fatal, for it hindered the precautions from being taken which might have prevented it.

About the commencement of the revolution, the Abbé Cerutti called on me, to beg me to give him, from time to time, some pieces of my own composition, for a journal, called *La Feuille Villageoise*, of which he was editor. He assured me that this journal contained the most pacific and

the most moral sentiments. I consented to write for it, and I sent him several pieces, under the title of "*Letters of Marie-Anne*;" but as these letters were full of religion, the Abbé Cerutti returned to beg that I would not mention religion, but confine myself to morals. I understood that phrase, and knew well what it meant; I replied, that I would thenceforth write no more for the *Feuille Villageoise*, and I ceased from that moment to do so. I published successively my moral Discourses on the education of the Dauphin; on cloistered Schools, whereby I proposed to replace the convents of nuns, of which I regretted the loss; on the Education of the People; on Gymnastics, as applied to Education; on public Education, &c. &c. All these discourses appeared in the course of the year 1790; they are collected in one volume, and to be found in my works.*

I was of no party, but that of religion. I desired to see the reformation of certain abuses, and I saw with joy the demolition of the Bastille, the abolition of *lettres de cachet*, and of the rights of the chase; this was all I wished for; and my politics never went further. At the same time, no one saw with more grief and horror than I did, the excesses which were committed at the time

* Under the title of *Discours Moraux*.—(*Author.*)

the Bastille was taken, of which, as I have said, I rejoiced in the demolition. This did not alter my opinion, that such an arbitrary act, on the part of the people, was a violation of what was due to sovereign authority; but I could not suppress a lively emotion of satisfaction at witnessing the destruction of this terrible monument, in which had been confined, and wherein had perished, without even a form of justice, so many innocent victims.*

The desire I had of showing my pupils every thing, (which on this occasion made me take an imprudent step,) induced me to come from St. Leu, to pass a few hours at Paris, to witness from the garden of Beaumarchais, the assembling of the whole population of the capital, for the purpose of pulling down and demolishing the Bastille. It would be impossible to give an idea of the sight; you must have seen it, in order to conceive it as it was; this redoubtable fortress was covered with men, women, and children, working with unequalled ardour, even on the most lofty parts of the building, and on its turrets. The astonishing number of these voluntary workmen, their activity, their enthusiasm, their pleasure at seeing the fall of that terrible monument of

* See the *Memoirs of Dangeau*.—(*Author.*)

tyranny,* these avenging hands, which seemed consecrated by Providence, and which annihilated with such rapidity, the work of many centuries—all this spoke at once to the imagination and the heart.

No one has been more shocked than I at the excesses committed at the taking of the Bastille; but as I had also been witness, for twenty years, of many arbitrary imprisonments—as I have never cast my eyes without shuddering on that fortress—I acknowledge, that its demolition caused me the highest pleasure. I had also the curiosity to see the club of the Cordeliers, of which I have given the most faithful description in *Les Parvenus*.† In the early part of the revolution, the eldest of my pupils discovered an instance of generosity and greatness of soul, which I cannot overlook here. He was informed, in my presence, that a decree had just annulled all the rights of elder brothers; upon this, he embraced the Duke of Montpensier, and cried out, "Ah, how de-

* It is well known, that the greater part of these imprisonments took place without the king's knowledge, and that the signature of a bad minister was sufficient to give a *lettre de cachet* all its power.—*(Note by the Author.)*

† See the English translation, under the title of *Julien Delmours, or the new Era*.

lighted I am!" He was received at the jacobin club, at the wish of the Duke of Orleans, certainly not at mine; nevertheless, it must be remembered that this club was by no means at that time what it became afterwards; however, its sentiments were of a very exaggerated tone; I had caused him to be received a member, the year before, of the Philanthropic Society, of which M. de Charost* was the president; but, as I have stated, I did not wish him to be received into the Jacobin Club. Yet this was the pretext which was used, to withdraw from me the favour of the Duchess of Orleans.

As soon as the Duke of Chartres had attained his seventeenth year, the Duke of Orleans informed me that his education was at an end, and they gave him an establishment; but the Duke of Chartres was so prudent, and so attached to me, that he said he would come daily, till he was eighteen, to Belle Chasse, to take his lessons as usual; he never failed to do this, which is an admirable trait in a young man, who had now become his own master.

The following are the distinguished persons who had been attached to his education, and who re-

* M. de Charost was a person of universal benevolence; his whole life was one long act of charity.—(*Editor.*)

mained so to his person: M. Peyre, whose merit and talents alone engaged me to ask a place for him, which he had not solicited, and whom I did not know personally; but we had been present at the first representation of his piece, entitled *The School for Fathers*, and my esteem for the work inspired me with so much regard for the author, who was then very young, that I earnestly desired he might be attached to my pupil, not as a teacher, but in quality of secretary. I proposed the appointment to the Duke of Orleans, who granted it immediately. I have had every reason to be satisfied with what I did, in all respects; having always found in M. Peyre, a sincere friendship for me, and attachment to the Duke of Chartres, excellent behaviour during the period of the princes' education, and all sorts of virtues and social qualities. He made our home very agreeable, by his talents and his pleasant manners; when we gave our little fêtes, he embellished them by charming couplets and verses, of which he addressed many to me.

M. Mérys, of whom I have already spoken and who was one of the secretaries, after having been *too much* attached to me, ended, like many others, by displaying great aversion and great ingratitude to me. I placed also about the Duke

of Chartres, a relation of M. de Bonnard, called M. de Broval, who was recommended to me by Madame Necker, and who was accepted on my simple recommendation. I procured splendid places or Messieurs de Grave and de St. Blancard. M. d'Avaray, whom I had frequently seen at Spa, and who was so distinguished for his wit, and the qualities of his heart, entreated me to interest myself for the Chevalier de Grave; I promised, and I kept my word. M. d'Avaray introduced him to me at Belle Chasse; and I formed a very ntimate acquaintance with him At this time I was engaged in forming my botany of artificial flowers; he asked me for a plant of my making, and I gave him, in a box, a pomegranate;* he seemed to attach a great value to this gift of friendship; I counted him in the list of my sincerest friends, and yet, since the restoration, I have never seen him! His conduct, however, shall not hinder me from rendering justice to his good qualities; he has many excellent ones; his affection for his mother was touching and unaltered, and his morals have been always irreproachable.†

* Among the ancients, this flower was sacred to friendship.—(*Author.*)

† The above was written long before his death.—(*Note by the Author.*)

One instance of ingratitude which I have experienced, and which surpasses all the others, is the following. I have already mentioned, that Messieurs de Queissat had a fourth brother, who being absent at the time of their unfortunate affair, was not involved in it; he lived in Paris at liberty, while his brothers were in prison. He came daily to the Palais Royal, to tell me of their condition, and to perform my commissions for them, and for Gerbier their advocate; he did not go to Corsica, but remained at Paris. Two or three years previous to the revolution, he was about to marry a young lady of Bordeaux, but being a Protestant, there were many difficulties thrown in the way by M. de Cicé, then Archbishop of Bordeaux. He had recourse to me, and begged me to write to the archbishop, who was then at Paris; and though I was not acquainted with the archbishop, I did what he wished. The archbishop did me the honour to come to Belle Chasse, where we discussed the matter; all the difficulties were removed, and the marriage took place. In the first year of the revolution, M. de Queissat attached himself specially to M. de La Fayette, who passed at that time for an enemy of the Duke of Orleans. Whether this was the case or not, M. de Queissat thought to gratify him by de-

nouncing me as having a collection of arms at Belle Chasse; on that absurd piece of information, M. de La Fayette sent alguazils to Belle Chasse, to search the house from garret to cellar. All my pupils were witnesses of this ridiculous search; they were all assembled about me, and we were reading, at the time when this singular visit was announced, and its object. Without discovering the least surprise, I gave orders to allow the officers to enter, and continued my reading; they entered, and the chief of the band, in a very emphatic tone, described his purpose, and demanded the keys of my closets; I had two of them in my pocket, and only interrupted my reading to hear what he had to say, and to answer laconically—*Search.* I gave him my two keys, but never turned my head towards him, nor looked at him; then I continued my reading as before. I felt at this moment that the kind of indignation which goes the length of contempt, inspires the greatest calm, and the most perfect coolness. These instruments of revolutionary despotism were enraged at the disdain I discovered, and they showed this by making a search most ridiculously minute. At last they departed, having found no other arms than some foils, a quiver and some arrows, belonging to my pupils.

Before concluding here what I have further to say, relative to the education of my pupils, I ought to give a rapid sketch of the method I employed for forming their hearts and their understandings. I have already mentioned that, besides the journal of M. Lebrun, written by him daily, and containing all that took place, evening and morning in my absence, I wrote (*only* for my pupils, and their father and mother, who never read them,) detailed extracts from this journal, which were signed by the princes and Mademoiselle. They are to be found in the *Letters of a Governess*, which I printed in 1790, under the eyes of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, so that nothing can be more authentic. On quitting France in 1791, I deposited all these journals in the hands of M. Gabiou, a notary, with permission to read them to all those who might doubt of their perfect conformity with the printed *Letters of a Governess*. On my return to France, M. Gabiou restored them to me with the scrupulous honesty which marks his character. I have since given up all these manuscript journals to the Duke of Orleans.

I must here give some detached pieces of these extracts. I must premise, that I gave them almost daily subjects of composition, which I also

wrote upon myself, in order to communicate them to my pupils, when the latter brought me their essays.

The following are some of my compositions:

HOW WE OUGHT TO CONDUCT OURSELVES TOWARDS OUR FRIENDS.

We must first, as I have said, choose them well. In order to do this, we must ascertain whether the person whom we desire for a friend has a good reputation; if he passes for having a generous mind; if he is a good son; if he lives with his parents; if his parents are considered in society; if he himself passes for possessing talents or accomplishments; if his manners are elegant and polite. If all these conditions are fulfilled, you may begin to be acquainted with that person, but do not go too far at first; you ought to study him, to ascertain if he is discreet and sincere—which may be easily discovered in a thousand little instances. You must see if he is secret as to what passes in company, if he is incapable of a meanness or a falsehood; and if, at the end of the time necessary to assure yourself upon all these points, you find he possesses all these virtues, you may cultivate his friendship.

When you once have friends, you will find certain means of discovering whether they are really attached to you. The following are indubitable signs of this.

If they are exceedingly reserved in their demands of favours which you can grant:

If they never ask a favour which might make you commit an injustice towards another:

If they never flatter you:

If they give you salutary advice at the risk of displeasing you for the moment:

If they acquaint you with your faults:

If they encourage you with all their might in the love of your duty:

If they employ all their credit with you, to keep up the union which ought to reign among yourselves, and to confirm you in the belief that your principal duty is to contribute to the happiness of your father and mother, that the true felicity of your life consists in cherishing them always, in consulting them in every thing, in concealing nothing from them, in having an intimate and unlimited confidence in them, and lastly, in living in the most tender union with your brothers and sister.

If you find friends who talk and act thus, you may give them all your confidence. You will

find few of this description; but all who conduct themselves otherwise, are undeserving of the name of friends; and if you ever meet with persons, who, by direct or indirect means, seek to diminish the tenderness you owe to your parents, be sure they have no real attachment to yourself, and that they are both contemptible and dangerous. If you meet with friends worthy of you, you are bound to render them all the services you can perform, without being unjust to others. You ought to prevent them from having to ask whatever they reasonably desire. You ought to attend to their advancement; and besides the favours which you may bestow upon them yourself, you should solicit others for them of the court, with the utmost warmth and perseverance. You ought also to interest yourself in all that concerns them, and at the same time that you discover confidence in them, you should seem to solicit theirs; that is to say, question them as if you felt an interest in their affairs and their feelings, and make them speak of themselves to you as much as you speak to them of yourself. If you only seem to love them for the sake of being listened to, you may have *confidents*, but you will have no friends. This is the reason why princes in general have none. I do not here allude to the tender attentions due to

your friends when they are sick or in affliction—these are matters of course. This is a picture of what you ought to be to your intimate friends—in other words to one or two persons. Besides these real friends, you may also have some acquaintances, who bear in society the title of friends, but who are in fact only such by the consent of that society. There are also duties belonging to these connexions, but they are very subordinate to those of real friendships; these duties consist in sometimes rendering the persons in question services, and at all times shewing an air of interest in what concerns them, and a constant esteem towards their persons. I think if your brothers had any good reason for disliking any individual who should not have been previously your friend, that of itself would be a sufficient reason to prevent you from forming a particular friendship with that person. But if you had already formed such a friendship, and any one of your brothers conceived an aversion for the object of it, this would be no reason for breaking with that person, unless the individual had really conducted himself ill towards your brother, or that he sought to disunite you and your brother; as in either the one case or the other, he must be a contemptible person, he would consequently cease to be worthy of your

friendship. Except on this supposition, you ought not to lose a friend, merely because his society did not happen to be relished by your brothers; you ought to make that agreement among yourselves, for it is founded on reason. But if your parents quarrelled with any one of your friends, you ought to cease to be acquainted with that person, unless they directed you differently. As you ought to be convinced that your parents have too much sense and experience to act from mere accident, prejudice, or caprice, you cannot doubt, when you find them dislike any one, that they have excellent reasons for so doing, and their conduct in the matter ought to regulate yours and fix your opinion. You ought not to suffer any one of your friends to be accused of any offence against yourself without proofs, especially to your private ear. Distrust every one who endeavours to give you a bad opinion of your friends; envy is almost always the motive of these informations, and when they are not supported by positive proofs, you ought to despise them, and impose silence by an air of coldness and of complete incredulity, upon those who are the informers. But, even if any one were to accuse your friend, and to bring proofs of his accusation, however great might be your friend's error, and however positive the proofs

of it might appear, you would fail in the first duty of friendship, if you determined, upon these alone, to withdraw your friendship from your friend. What seems a positive proof, may turn out to be an error, or an illusion, or a deceit; this is what a generous mind ought to suppose when those they love are accused; therefore, before taking any decided step, you ought to have a clear and frank explanation with your friend, for it is only thus that he can justify himself, and you would yourself be blamable if you did not furnish him all the means in your power for doing so. If in that justification he clears himself, you have the happiness of preserving a friend whom this proceeding will attach to you more than ever; and if he cannot clear himself, you should then, without any noise or exposure, withdraw your acquaintance from him by degrees, and in that way you may do so without injustice. These, my children, are the principal duties of friendship. If these are so numerous, judge what those must be which you owe to your brothers, who are far dearer and truer friends than any whom you can find in society; judge then, what you owe to a tender father and and an affectionate mother, who are truly our first friends, and the only ones whom we can trust implicitly in all things!

ON SECRECY AS TO WHAT OCCURS IN COMPANY.

This quality consists, not only in keeping with inviolable fidelity the secrets which are intrusted to us, but in never repeating any thing that may be said in a company somewhat select, that is to say, consisting of persons who live much among themselves; and even, if in a large party any thing inconsiderate should be said, or any malignant remark made upon another, it should neither be quoted along with the name of the person, nor should the remark be mentioned without giving any name. If the observation is talked of, and if, knowing that you were present when it was made, any person should question you upon it, you must absolutely refuse to answer, saying that you do not wish to interfere in any vexatious matters, and that, consequently, you never reply to similar questions. If you witness any treacherous or perfidious conduct, avoid joining in it; detest the perpetrators of it from your heart; but do not interfere, in the way of acquainting those who are the objects of the treachery with what is meditated against them, unless they be persons very dear to you; for you will thus, while you think you are rendering a service, involve yourself in a

thousand difficulties. There is no security in society, when any person belonging to it is a tatler or a satirical or scandalous person; for the tattler, in order to have the pleasure of speaking, utters a hundred things without thinking, which compromise many individuals: the satirist, for the sake of a bad joke, frequently says indiscreet and wicked things; and the dealer in scandal repeats all the ill he knows of others, which is equally hateful and blameable, and furthermore, he often, without intending it, calumniates by repeating the evil he hears, which is always exaggerated, and very frequently false.

It often happens that in moments of peevishness, we speak lightly of those we love the most; this is exceedingly blameable, and I hope never to find an instance of it in you; but you must excuse it in others, especially when you are sure that they have good hearts; so that if persons whom you esteemed, and who were otherwise good friends, should exhibit in your presence any instances of this failing, it would be very wrong in you to acquaint them mutually with such a fact; you ought on the contrary to soften the faults of each in the eyes of the other, employ all your interest with them to prevent any quarrel, and do all in your power to promote a mutual good understanding,

by concealing whatever might tend to irritate the one against the other. This is the way in which you ought always to conduct yourself, especially in the bosom of your family, with your brothers, sister, sisters-in-law, &c. When you observe any coolness among them, (which I hope will never be the case, though it is possible,) you must only interfere in order to speak words of peace and reconciliation, and to avoid all that may tend to irritation. If this conduct is to be observed in an intimate correspondence with your friends, it is of course still more your duty to follow the same plan with regard to your brothers and sisters, to whom such behaviour becomes a sacred duty. There is another thing which is fatal to discretion, and consequently to secrecy as to what passes in company; and that is the ridiculous vanity of appearing to know all the secrets of all the persons of your acquaintance. There is nothing however so foolish and so contemptible, as to betray a secret merely for the sake of proving that you know it. You must also, in order to be secret, guard against a frivolous curiosity, which moreover always proves a want of mind; the persons who are always prying into every thing that is passing, and into all the little intrigues which are going on, are always people who have nothing

else to engage their minds, and are generally reckoned dangerous in society.

You see a person requires many qualities to render him a sure person in society; and society in turn prizes so highly this great virtue, that all other qualities are valued as nothing without it, And nothing is more natural, for there is no virtue by which society is so highly benefited. Therefore strive from this time forward to acquire it, and to correct in yourself all the defects which may prevent you from possessing it.

DIRECTIONS AS TO THE DUTIES WHICH THE PUPILS OWE TO THOSE EMPLOYED IN THEIR EDUCATION.

Monseigneur and Madame in the pensions and favours which they grant, or may grant to the persons who have been or may be employed in your education, recompense the cares of which you are the object; but such a recompense, however ample it may be, far from acquitting you from the obligation of testifying your personal sense of their kindness, is but an excellent example which they give you, and ought to increase your desire of personally discharging the debt, when it shall be in your power. It is now time,

my children, for you to think duly of the manner in which you ought one day to pay debts so sacred to a feeling and grateful heart. I have told you this a thousand times, but since you like to read this journal, I shall here assemble the detail of all your duties on this head. You owe to every one that bears the name of Rochambault marks of your particular esteem and proofs of your interest in them. To Madame Desrois you owe your friendship and your services; you have it in your power to render her essential ones, by protecting her son-in-law, who is himself a meritorious person. When you shall be your own masters, you should make enquiries into the actual situation of Prieur and Nonon; and if they require any comforts you should eagerly provide them: and this you should do with a readiness and an air of interest which will double the gifts. In continuing your favours to them, you will do honour to yourselves. You should load all about you with the little favours you have it in your power to bestow—M. Mérys, M. Meeke, (if he remains) your teachers, your servants, &c. according to their deserts, their talents, and their services. With respect to the Abbé Guyot and M. Lebrun, you must feel that you owe them your tenderest friendship for the whole of your life. You ought to render their

existence agreeable, by showing them a constant friendship and marks of esteem. The abbé Guyot with his abbey and his pension, will be left in easy circumstances; therefore you can only testify your sense of the obligations you owe him by your attentions to him, by services, solicitations of favours for his relations, and your anxious enquiries about him if he should happen to be sick; the same conduct is to observed towards M. Lebrun; and these attentions will be no more than due to persons who have rendered you so many of the same kind in the course of your education. For my own part, do you know how I expect you to recompense *my* services? I must tell you; for though I neither ask of you *pensions*, nor *presents*, nor *attentions*, nor *favours* of any kind, I still wish that you should acquit yourselves of what you owe me. This you can only do by *following the advice which I have given you in this book.* You owe me furthermore to take an interest in my daughters, to give them your friendship, to show some affection for the objects which belong to me, and which are dear to my heart; to protect my nephew, who, I am sure, will personally deserve your favours, for he possesses talents and an excellent disposition. Think of this my dear children, and

think of it often. Talking on this subject, I ought to say that it seems to me that you are too cold in your manner towards Madame Desrois; you scarcely speak to her, you show her no attention, and never ask after her health; all this is wrong. I again entreat and conjure you, think more of your duties, and know that true happiness and true glory consist in fulfilling them all.

[I ought here to state, in explanation of the names introduced into the above remarks, that the late Marchioness of Rochambault was governess of the Dukes of Chartres and Montpensier, from their birth to the age of five; Madame Desrois was their under-governess during the same space of time. The coolness of the princes towards her sprung from her having publicly quarrelled with me, without either reason or explanation, though I had rendered her great service with the Duke of Orleans.

Mademoiselle Nonon died two years ago. When she left Mademoiselle d'Orleans, whose attendant she was, I obtained for her of the Duke of Orleans a present of sixty louis, and a pension for life of two thousand francs; after his death, the Dukes of Chartres and Montpensier made inquiries with regard to her relations, and finding

she had a brother who was infirm and poor, they allowed him a pension for life of six hundred francs.—AUTHOR.]

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE WHICH I WROTE FOR MY PUPILS.

Have I fulfilled my duties towards God my Creator? Have I prayed to him with fervour and confidence? Have I listened with respect and attention to the instructions given me with regard to Christian duty and to the reading of works of piety? Have I thought to-day of the objects which I ought to love most in the world, of my father and mother? Have I fulfilled all my duties towards my parents? Have I behaved with kindness and mildness towards my sister and my brothers? Have I been docile, grateful, and attentive to my teachers? Have I disobliged no one? Have I to reproach myself with uttering no evil tidings? Have I been perfectly sincere? Have I been as prudent, discreet, charitable, modest, courageous as may be expected at my age? Have I shown no proofs of the weakness and effeminacy so contemptible in a man? Have I done all the good I might? Have I shown all

the marks of attention I ought, to the persons absent or present, to whom I owe affection, respect, gratitude, friendship, regard, and kindness?

You ought to examine yourself on all these points, beg God to pardon your errors, entreat him to grant you his grace, to prevent you from falling into them, and promise in your own heart to repair next day your omissions and negligences, all you have forgotten, and, in short, whatever faults you may have committed.

[This examination of conscience I gave to M. Lebrun, who from that time read it every evening to his pupils. At the same period, I wrote for them a work since published, entitled "*Religion considered as the only basis of happiness and philosophy.*"—AUTHOR.]

REPRIMAND ADDRESSED TO THE DUKE OF CHARTRES.

I am content with you all. The Duke of Chartres is more accustomed to society, and ought to follow me less constantly about; he knows the value I place on his esteem, and he ought only to regard as a proof of mine, the manner in which I sometimes receive him, when he forgets what he owes to others, in order to follow me, to place him-

self by my side, and, in short, to devote all his attention to me, which gives him the awkward air of a little boy, who dares not venture to separate himself a moment from the person who takes charge of him. Besides, all these exclusive preferences are troublesome, and do not constitute true friendship; it is not these little demonstrations which fortify it; he should leave these manners and caresses to weak women—confidence, esteem, unvarying attentions, and inviolable fidelity, are the qualities which nourish friendship. In short, I know nothing so puerile, or so little becoming in a man, as that manner of showing your love, which leads you to look at, or listen to no one but me; and to discover an invincible sadness when you cannot be by my side in the carriage, &c. &c. You cannot imagine what a degree of awkwardness this gives you in the eyes of others; you ought to be persuaded that I love you always, but if you desire to please me, show yourself pleasing to every body else.

DISINTERESTEDNESS OF THE DUKE OF CHARTRES.

The Duke of Chartres wrote me this day a most touching letter: here are some passages of it

extracted literally from the original, which I shall preserve all my life, as a thing most precious to my heart: "I propose to deprive myself of my pocket-money up to the conclusion of my education, that is to say, up to the first of April, 1790, and to devote that money to beneficent purposes. On the first of each month we will decide the use that is to be made of it; I beg you to receive on this subject my most sacred word of honour, I should wish this to remain a secret between ourselves; but you know well that all my secrets are, and always shall be yours."

Since you permit me to do so, it is but right that I thould inscribe this in the same journal where I record scrupulously all your faults. It is right that I should give such an example. When you do wrong, I blame you without hesitation; when you do right, I praise you frankly—I tell you in every thing the exact and simple truth. I shall therefore say to the Duke of Chartres, that he has greatly improved in disposition during the last year; he was born with good inclinations; he is now become intelligent and virtuous. He has none of the frivolity of his age; he sincerely disdains the puerilities which occupy the pursuit of so many young men—such as fashions, dress, trinkets, trifles of all kinds, the rage for following

new modes in dress, &c. &c. He has no passion for money, he is disinterested, despises glare, and is, consequently, truly noble; lastly, he has an excellent heart, which is common to all of you, and which, joined to reflection, is capable of producing all other good qualities. The Duke of Montpensier is less exempt from vanities and frivolities, he is not so mild or so docile, but then he is younger; he has a natural inclination to admire whatever is honourable, and his character is particularly distinguished for the sense of equity which forms its basis. He has great delicacy of sentiment, and a very lively imagination. What he is particularly deficient in, is a certain inability to moderate and govern his self-love; this leads him to put a value on trifles, which narrow the mind and the understanding; when he shall have corrected this defect, he will acquire all he now wants; he will cease to be so susceptible; he will no longer give such importance to a coat or waistcoat; he will no longer think it worth while to ridicule trifles which are of no consequence in themselves. All this, however, is only applicable to the past; for I have not the slightest fault to find with his behaviour or his disposition, since the institution of the system of prizes.

I must here render some account of the state of my heart and my understanding, during this series of years. I have stated that these years were happy ones; and they were so up to the time I lost my daughter, my mother, and Madame de Puisieux, which was not till towards the close of the princes' education; but I did not feel this as I ought. I have always wished to be beloved by the persons about me; *distant* hatreds move me not; but I support them ill when they are near. Though beloved by all my pupils, I was constantly tormented by the jealousies, the deceptions, and the vexations I underwent from the Abbé Guyon, and from the thoughtlessness, the weakness, and the ingratitude of M. Lebrun. I left nothing undone that could be accomplished by patience, mildness, or generosity, in order to render them my friends, but in vain. Besides, I had reason to be displeased with the conduct of some of my friends; since I had become an author, I no longer experienced from them the same confidence; they supposed I had pretensions and self-love which I did not possess, and they delighted in constantly contradicting me; they affected to believe that I had neither good sense nor talents but when I had a pen in my hand, or when talking of education or literature,

and that I was ignorant of every thing else; they laughed at my opinions, and delighted in doing exactly the reverse of what I advised; I have painted all this after nature in my novel, entitled *La Femme Auteur*. A woman in such a career ought to expect to meet with more injustice than a man; but even men must undergo a great deal of it in society. When in high society, any one finds himself absolutely forced to acknowledge, that another individual possesses a superiority in any thing, he never fails to arrogate to himself other qualities, how frivolous soever they may chance to be; and this is why people constantly repeat such common-places about men of great talents, as—"Take them out of their art, take away their peculiar accomplishment, remove them from their writing desk, and they are good for nothing." This trivial method of satisfying themselves, which is peculiar to fools, or persons of middling talent is absurd, for the man who can achieve a work of genius, must be equally capable, if he chose, to give good advice relative to the commerce of life, or the details of housekeeping.

I was at this time the object of foolish attachments, which annoyed me greatly. The Abbé Mariottini, as I have stated, gave daily a lesson of Italian to my pupils: one day at St. Leu, in-

stead of following them out of the room as usual, after the lesson, he remained alone with me. As usual, I was writing when he approached the table where I sat. I asked him what he wanted; when suddenly, and without any preparation, he threw himself at my feet, and made me a declaration of love the most formal and the most ridiculous. At the same moment, the basket-maker, who taught us to make baskets, entered, and found him in that situation; he rushed precipitately out of the room; and all the house, of course, soon learned the adventure. I wrote to him the same day, to beg that he would give in his resignation, which was the most polite mode of discharging him. He replied like a genuine Italian, by a letter, full of love, menaces, and extravagance. He confined himself to his bed, declaring himself ill. He had in reality fever and jaundice, and kept his room for three weeks, at the end of which, towards the close of October, we returned to Paris. He then, without mentioning any thing to the nuncio of his ridiculous behaviour, made such complaints of the manner in which I had treated him, that M. Doria wrote to me on the subject. I begged him to have the goodness to give me an interview of five minutes; upon which he came to Belle Chasse. I told him the affair, and

showed him the first letter of the Abbé Mariottini, and five or six others in the same strain which he had subsequently written to me: the nuncio was quite confounded at the excess of the man's folly and impudence, and told me that he would have the madman sent off to Italy. I got rid of him in this manner: but this affair occasioned me to write and read many letters, to have an infinite number of disagreeable explanations, and to find another Italian teacher; in short to lose an enormous deal of time—a thing which I have always regretted doing.

In place of returning to Italy the Abbé Mariottini went to England, where he wrote a libel upon me, called *The Countess of Genlis unveiled*, with an English translation on the opposite page. He did not presume to attack my reputation in that absurd effusion, which consisted merely of violent declamations against my imperious and *furious* disposition. He afterwards returned to France, where he fell into misery, and died at the Hospital of Incurables, two years before my return to Paris.

I was not successful in finding a teacher of Italian: I could not get an ecclesiastic. I was therefore obliged to replace the Abbé Mariottini by two other persons. I took for almoner the Abbé

Famin, an ecclesiastic exceedingly estimable, and a very agreeable companion; and for my Italian teacher I selected M. de la R * * *, who was warmly recommended to me. I had every reason to be pleased with him for two or three years. At the end of this time, when at Saint Leu, one evening after having given the princes their lesson, he remained in the room; and after a pause of a few minutes, he threw himself at my feet and burst into tears. This recalled so strongly to mind the action of the Abbé Mariottini, that I remained as if petrified. But M. de la R * * * caused me another sort of surprise. He told me that, devoured with remorse, he desired to open his heart to me, and that he was the greatest of *villains*; a confession which frightened me terribly. I interrogated him tremblingly, when he confessed, with sobs, that were really convulsive, that he was an apostate monk. There was a woman living with him who passed for his wife, and who bore his name. He entreated me to intercede with the nuncio to obtain his reconciliation with the church, on condition of his submitting to whatever penitence might be imposed upon him; I did as he desired, and the nuncio had the goodness to do in the matter all that could be reasonably expected. M. de la R * * * immediately returned to Italy, in order

to enter once more his convent, which was near Naples.

M. Mérys, whom I esteemed for his fine talents as a painter and for his amiableness in private, was seized with the same madness as the Abbé Mariottini, but at least, though he told it to others, he never declared it to me. It occasioned me much constraint, though I feigned ignorance of it, and bore with all his peevishness and his susceptibilities. I did not know that he used to pass whole nights in my grand corridor, where I could not hear any one walking about, as there was a carpet. My room had three doors: one opened to the right into that of Mademoiselle; the other to the left into that of Pamela; and the third into the corridor. I had caused the latter to be shut up, in order still farther to remove the noise; and I had caused double folding-doors to be placed on the side leading to the corridor. M. Mérys placed himself between these two doors, to hear whatever might be passing in my room after every one was retired to rest. In general I played on the guitar for half an hour, and afterwards I spoke aloud to myself when alone, according to my old habit. I composed many kinds of little romances, which I divided into conversations; and as I had the power of assuming all varieties of tone, I employed

it when I lent my voice to my imaginary personages, which gave my scenes to my own ear an air of reality which was delightful. M. Mérys, as he stood behind the folding doors, caught every word of these dialogues, and took them for a reality; and the thing seemed to him so extraordinary, that he could not help confiding it to two or three persons. From confidence to confidence, the report spread about that I gave an asylum at Saint Leu to a young person whom her parents wished to force to espouse a monster, of whom she related to me the strangest and most terrible traits. No one could conceive in what part of the château the girl could be hid; all wearied themselves out in conjectures to divine the mystery; but all agreed in saying that it was quite certain I held conversations with her till three o'clock in the morning. This singular story spread about till it reached the ears of the Duke of Orleans, who came to Saint Leu expressly to speak to me on the subject: on this I burst into a fit of laughter, and easily persuaded him of the truth. It will no doubt be thought that these conversations were a sort of madness; I confess it, though at the same time I can assert that they have procured some of my happiest moments, and been to me the greatest consolations of my

existence; they were invested in my eyes with so perfect a reality, that they assumed the appearance of truth. I thus formed to myself friends of whom I had never to complain, and who made up to me for the injustice and the ingratitude of others. These have followed me every where; and though I have failed in finding real happiness, I have at least succeeded by means of the vivacity of my imagination, in creating a happiness that was ideal, though it was never perfect, and impossible from its nature to be so. This way of employing a plastic and active fancy, though not culpable, was misdirected; I ought to have entirely consecrated that faculty to religion, without mingling with my dreams any terrestrial or romantic illusions: instead of *dreaming*, I ought to have *meditated*, and should thus have obtained of heaven all the instruction and all the consolations which I found I so much required.

Several years before the Revolution I rejected an honour which some persons wished to confer on me, but of which I felt myself altogether unworthy. The marquis of Villette caused to be built at his château of Ferney, a kind of temple intended to contain the heart of Voltaire: he proposed to decorate the interior with engraved portraits of all the celebrated persons, male and fe-

male, whom M. de Voltaire had honoured with his friendship; in consequence he sent an artist to all those persons, to take their profiles from the life. M. de Villette sent this artist to me, with an extremely flattering letter, in which he told me that he had *reserved for me a place in the heart of M. de Voltaire*. It will be readily supposed that I did not give the painter a sitting: I sent a reply *full of modesty*, in which I *humbly* acknowledged that I had no claim to such a distinction. M. de Villette thought me very absurd; he complained of my letter, and I laughed at his: I have never been able to conceive how he could think of making such a proposal to a person whose principles were so well known. It is true that at this time I had not published *Adèle et Théodore*; but the *Théâtre d'Education*, which was entirely completed, was sufficient to proclaim the nature of my opinions and my religious principles.

Madame du Bocage did not fail to obtain a place *in the heart* of M. de Voltaire. The latter had written many verses in her honour; among others the following:

Milton, dont vous suivez les traces,
Vous prête ses transports divins:
Eve est la mère des humains,
Et vous êtes celle des Grâces.

Comment n'eût-elle pas séduit
La raison la plus indomptable ?
Vous lui donnez tout votre esprit,
Adam étoit bien pardonnable.

Sa faute a perdu l'univers ;
Elle ne doit plus nous déplaire,
Et son erreur nous devient chère,
Dès que nous lui devons vos vers.

. . . .

Etc. etc. . . . .

Such were the eulogies given by M. de Voltaire to those who bent down to him and to philosophy. It was about this very time that he wrote to Madame du Châtelet—" Rousseau is returned to Brussels, to write bad odes."

In looking over this volume, which was written long since, in order to prepare it for the press, I may mention that the verses of Voltaire on Madame du Bocage remind me of an anecdote piquant for the contrast it affords, which I find in the Memoirs of M. de Grimm, in an account of M. de Voltaire's reception of Madame du Bocage at the *Delices*. " I was present," says M. de Grimm, " at the entertainment, and I can give some details of it of which the heroine of the day herself was ignorant. M. de Voltaire tried the

whole day to compose a verse upon her, but could not succeed. The god of poetry knowing the use he wished to make of his talents, had withdrawn his influence from him. The hour of supper came, but still there were no verses. The bard of Henry IV. in despair, had laurels brought, of which he formed a crown which he placed on the head of the poor *Columbiad*, making a pair of horns with the other hand and putting out his tongue, in the sight of twenty people who were at table. I myself, who believe religiously in the duty of hospitality and in its divine origin, was much grieved to see the first poet in France violate that sacred duty with regard to a good creature who took all his pleasantries in earnest."

Some years before the revolution, I had occasion to have a good deal of correspondence with three celebrated men of letters. When the old Duke of Orleans died, I sincerely approved of the conduct of the prince his son, who determined on performing an action which has been deservedly praised. His father gave pensions to several learned men, of six hundred francs each; the Duke of Orleans declared, of his own accord, that he would continue them; and I furthermore induced him to grant similar pensions to the same number of literary men; on which he requested me to point

out those who, in my opinion, possessed the highest talents. I immediately named Messieurs de la Harpe and Marmontel, who had become my enemies; and afterwards M. Palissot, with whom I was not at all acquainted, but who had one great merit in my opinion—that of being opposed to the philosophers; M. Gaillard and M. Bernardin de Saint Pierre, who had just published his fine work called the *Studies of Nature*. The Duke of Orleans desired I would announce to these gentlemen in the way most agreeable to themselves, his determination: which I did, and these announcements were very graciously received. I had been enchanted with the *Studies of Nature*, and I testified my satisfaction to M. de Buffon, in whose judgment I have never found any shadow of prejudice, but with regard to that work; but this did not alter my opinion of its merits. M. de Saint Pierre was at that time in the deepest poverty; the pension to which I have alluded, gave him inexpressible pleasure, and he wrote to me a letter full of the liveliest gratitude. I knew he had a little garden, and I sent him, as from my pupils, six fine orange trees, and thirty pots of flowers; I also carried the Duke of Chartres and his brothers to pay him a visit. He then came to Belle Chasse, and from that time showed a sincere

attachment to me; which lasted for six months with the same intensity; but unfortunately, at the end of that time, M. de Sillery, who esteemed him highly, played off a joke upon him, which M. de Saint Pierre took in earnest. M. de Sillery thought he took the jest as it was meant, and continued in the same tone; but to his great surprize the conversation, which rose on the part of M. de Saint Pierre into a real dispute, terminated by an unexpected scene. M. de Saint Pierre got up in fury, saying he would never return to my house in his life. M. de Sillery ran out after him, and vainly attempted to recall him; he left us full of anger. I had not interfered in the scene, but I perceived that M. de Saint Pierre had taken up in a wrong light what was only ironically said, and had thus turned into a serious effusion of malignity what was only an amiable and obliging piece of pleasantry. I had fruitlessly made signs and endeavoured to interrupt this little dialogue. I wrote to M. de Saint Pierre to explain the matter; but he replied coldly that M. de Sillery had *insulted* him in the most *brutal* manner, and that he never again would visit my house; a thing extremely unjust towards me, even supposing his absurd opinion to have been well-founded, as I had no share in the subject of his displeasure. I replied

in the most friendly tone; nothing could appease him; and he kept his word, for he never returned to my house. Such behaviour as this removed all the regret I might otherwise have felt on the occasion; I never met with any man of letters less formed for society or less agreeable in it. Rousseau was susceptible, but at least he was acquainted with life; he was incapable of getting angry about so stupid a matter as this, and his conversation was extremely delightful—a quality of which M. de Saint Pierre was altogether destitute. Subsequently, on my return from Germany into France, I met him some years after at the house of one of my female friends, when he requested permission to visit me. I was not at all desirous of his visits; and replied that I lived in a state of absolute solitude, and received no one; he persisted, but in vain. Besides his conduct towards me on the occasion I have referred to, I was displeased with the conduct he had held during the revolution. He took no part in its cruelties; but for a person who had always displayed religious principles, he conducted himself in a very cowardly manner, in accepting the place of professor of public instruction under Robespierre, seeing that religion was absolutely banished from the system of education and instruction then in use. The best of M. de

Saint Pierre's works is the *Studies of Nature.* His little romance of *Paul and Virginia* is full of charming touches, but many of the scenes are very weakly drawn; there is one in particular at once false and indelicate in its conception—I allude to that in which Virginia, on rising one morning, finds herself "glowing so ardently with the fires of love," that in order to preserve her purity, she is obliged to plunge herself into cold water. The regrets of Paul after her death are altogether destitute of force and truth. The *Indian Cottage* of the same author is by no means a good work; I fancy it is the only one written in the *graceful style* in which the word *croupion* occurs. The author says, that the wild ducks as they flew, brushed the water with their tails (*croupions.*) The other men of letters with whom I became acquainted on the death of the old Duke of Orleans, were M. Palissot, to whom, besides the pension of the duke, I had procured one of M. de Calonne; I even quarrelled with the minister on this head, for after he had promised me one of two thousand francs, in a letter which I showed to M. Palissot, he wished to allow but one thousand; which so enraged me, that I wrote to M. de Calonne, that if he did not keep his word, I would cause his letter to be made public. M. de Calonne granted the pension of

two thousand francs, but became my enemy. I did not see M. Palissot until after I had done all these things; he had written me letters full of the most passionate eulogies, which, so far from pleasing me, appeared to me somewhat wanting in delicacy, when he knew that I was then soliciting a pension for him. He afterwards came to thank me; I thought him agreeable and a good talker; he was then fifty-eight, and amused me greatly by relating to me a great many scandalous anecdotes against the philosophers. He printed a warm eulogy of my works in a work which he published about this period; but afterwards, when I was proscribed, and he remained in France, he published a new edition of the same book, in which he retracted all the praises he had given me, saying that in the former article he had only praised my talents so highly through gratitude, because I had at that time rendered him the greatest services.

I do not believe that ever baseness and ingratitude ventured to display themselves so openly. On my return to France, I found him among the number of my most ardent enemies; and afterwards he expressed a desire of renewing his acquaintance with me. At the time of our acquaintance he was the protector of a young poet, then

quite unknown, named M. Chénier. Palissot requested permission to present him to me, that I might hear the reading of a tragedy he had just completed, to which I agreed. The piece was called *Azémire,* and stolen from five or six other tragedies, particularly from *Zaïre*; it was quite detestable, but it was in vain that I tried to dissuade him from having it acted. Palissot pronounced it admirable, and his opinion prevailed. M. Chénier wished it first to be performed at Fontainebleau, where the court then was, and begged me to solicit that favour of the Duke d'Aumont, first gentleman of the chamber, on whom the matter depended. I wrote to the Duke d'Aumont, who sent me a very polite reply, requesting that he might have the piece, in order to read it; this greatly displeased M. Chénier, who said that it was impossible that a first gentleman of the chamber could know any thing about literature. Nevertheless, he sent his manuscript to the Duke d'Aumont, with a letter full of eulogies of his *taste and judgment*. The Duke d'Aumont, after reading the tragedy, returned it to me, remarking at the same time, that he thought it impossible it should succeed; but that, notwithstanding, if I persisted in my wish of having it performed, it should be represented at Fontainebleau;

however, he conjured me to read it again with attention, adding that he *ventured to think* I should then be of his opinion. I could not avoid showing this letter to M. Chénier, whose fury was indescribable; he poured out a torrent of abuse against the Duke d'Aumont, the gentlemen of the chamber, and on the great lords of the court in general; it was owing to this, that in the beginning of the revolution he published a pamphlet, in which he said in plain words, that all the lords of the court were merely *valets* and the ladies *female servants*. The Duke d'Aumont, however, judged rightly of the play: at my repeated solicitations he caused it to be performed, but the audience refused to hear it to the end. M. Chénier and M. Palissot professed themselves charmed at this, for they said it proved the piece to be good; and that such an act of injustice on the part of the court would only make it more applauded at Paris. In general this was true; but the piece was so detestable, that in this particular instance the public was of the same opinion with the court: it was hissed at Paris, and never performed again. M. Chénier read me also a little comedy called *the Page*, which M. Palissot with his usual prejudices in favour of M. Chénier, called a *little diamond:* I thought it exactly what it was, a stupid piece, written in a

very bad taste. I did not express my opinion so plainly, but I frankly said that I did not like it. M. Chénier insisted that this was because he read it badly; but he said that the talents of Mademoiselle Contat would ensure it the highest success; in spite, however, of all the abilities of that actress, *the little diamond* if it had not the *brilliancy of glass*, had at least *its fragility*; it *broke* irremediably on its first representation, and was never more mentioned. This unlucky first appearance of M. Chénier, in his literary career, did not at all diminish his arrogance, but it greatly increased his natural moroseness; however he was always exceedingly polite to me. He wrote some very gallant couplets for my birthday, and at a little *spectacle* exhibited on that occasion he placed himself by me, and speaking very low, his gallantry became in such bad taste and the expressions of what he styled his *passionate admiration*, so impertinent, that I was obliged to check him by assuming as much disdain as I could summon to my aid. In the greatest fury, he made the following reply, in which I do not change one word; "You are right; I am neither a great lord nor a duke." "Certainly," replied I, "there are none of these personages so ill educated as to express themselves with so little delicacy;" and

then I turned my back to him. From this moment he vowed an eternal hatred of me, but dissembled it till the period of the revolution; he continued to visit me, and I affected to have forgotten the little scene which I have here described.

When at the commencement of the revolution he published a pamphlet of which I have cited one expression, and which, from beginning to end, was grossly insulting to the noble orders, I refused to receive his visits; he came thrice, but was not allowed to enter, and I never saw him afterwards. When his Charles IX. was played, I was very curious to see a piece in which he has so unworthily calumniated the personages of history, among others, the Cardinal de Lorraine, who makes the soldiers swear on the sacred communion, that they will execute all the assassinations he may command! This extravagant crime, which was entirely of M. Chénier's invention, was the cause of the success of the piece. It is allowable in tragedies, romances, and poems to embellish the historical persons who figure on the scene, but it is not so to ascribe to them crimes which they never committed. To calumniate their memory is a still more cowardly crime than to violate their tombs. I carried my pupils to the first representation of that piece; as it was not the day

for which our box was hired, I had engaged another which was very conspicuous; at the execrable scene of the oath I rose up and led away my pupils; this action could not fail to be much remarked; it was a great deal spoken of, and raised to its height the envenomed hatred which M. Chénier bore me, and which endured in all its energy.*

He has committed the still greater crime of suffering his unhappy brother to perish, whom he might have saved, by employing all his credit during the reign of terror. It has been even generally said that he participated in his condemnation, but this I cannot believe; however this odious accusation was accredited by his silence at the time, when he might have completely justified himself. This horrible exaggeration of a very bad action, gave rise to an anecdote at once very curious and true. The celebrated actress Mademoiselle Dumesnil was still living at this time, but was very old and infirm; M. Chénier had never seen her, and one morning, without sending in his name, called upon her; he found her in bed, and so ill, that she could not reply to any of the obliging things he said to her; however M. Chénier entreated her merely to repeat one line of

* Up to the time of his death.—(*Note by the Author.*)

some tragedy, in order, as he said, to be able to boast of having heard her declaim, and Mademoiselle Dumesnil, making a strong effort, addressed him in the following line from one of her finest parts:

"Approchez-vous, Néron, et prenez votre place."

I also became acquainted at Belle Chasse with the author of a work, which, without being a good one, was agreeable in its way, and of which the earnestness pleased me; it is entitled the *Delights of Religion*. The author had a ridiculous name; he was called Abbé Lamourette; after the revolution he disgraced himself by accepting a bishopric in spite of the censures of the pope. As however he refused to abandon religion altogether, he was guillotined, and died in the most pious manner.

It was at Belle Chasse that I formed an intimacy with Madame Necker: before the revolution, she anticipated my visits, by writing me the most obliging letters, and by coming to see me; she brought her daughter with her who was then sixteen, and not yet married. This young lady was not pretty, but she was very animated, and though she spoke a great deal too much, she spoke cleverly. I remember reading to Madame

Necker one of the pieces of my *Theatre for young ladies* (that which bears the title of *Zélie*, or the *Ingenue*) which I had not yet published; a translation of it has often been played at London, and M. de Tressan wrote a romance founded upon it, which he dedicated to me.

Having mentioned M. de Tressan, I shall here collect a few particulars respecting him. He was a relative of Monsieur de Genlis, and was equally distinguished as a soldier, a savant, and a literary man: he was received a member both of the Academy of Sciences and the French Academy. His romances of chivalry, *Petit Jehan de Saintré*, the *Three Cousins*, *&c.* were very populaı. He had also a talent for poetry; his charming *Epistle to Fanny* (so absurdly imitated by M. Rivarol, who stole so many of the thoughts in it) was very successful. Several of his satirical songs are still remembered, some of which have the fault of being *too well* executed; among others, that which he addressed to a nobleman who was then famous in society for the union of all the accomplishments that could please and attract. After bestowing on him the most flattering eulogies, M. de Tressan finished the song thus:

"Les dieux t'auroient trop bien traité,
"S'ils t'avoient donné le courage."

This mocking wit contrasted singularly with the mildness and polish of his affectionate manners, which caused him to be compared to a wasp in a pot of honey.

There was in his constitution a peculiarity which he has himself mentioned to me; during the whole of his long life neither illness nor intoxication had ever for a moment bewildered his senses; he had been intoxicated several times in his youth, and upon those occasions his legs trembled and lost the power of supporting him, but he never talked nonsense, nor did any thing affect his brain. I saw him the evening before his death, when he possessed all his faculties. His death touched me the more as I was the innocent cause of it; every year, on the fête of Saint Felicité my patron, which fell on the 10th of July, my pupils and my children gave me an entertainment to which I invited M. de Tressan; he always attended, and brought with him some charming couplets. In the evening I pressed him to sleep at Saint Leu, as it had rained a great deal for some days past, and all the roads were very bad; however, he insisted on leaving us after supper; he went away, was overturned, and received a violent blow on the head; he refused to be bled; an abscess formed, and he died after an illness of forty days. He had reconciled himself

with religion, and had received the sacraments, when I went to visit him; I found him in the most pious frame of mind. The Abbé de Tressan, his son, was in the room; he desired him to relate what had passed the evening before; upon which the abbé told me that d'Alembert having understood that he had received the sacraments came to see him, in order to overwhelm him with the bitterest reproaches; that M. de Tressan had replied, that it was cruel to come thus and trouble his last moments; and that he added—"Besides, what does it matter to you? If you had any humanity, would you not rejoice to see me enjoy so great a consolation in dying?" M. de Tressan was upwards of eighty.

To return to my narrative. I read the piece I have already mentioned *(Zélie ou l'Ingenue)* to Madame Necker and her daughter. I cannot express the enthusiasm and the demonstrations of pleasure exhibited by the young person during this reading; they astonished without pleasing me; she wept, uttered exclamations at every page, and kissed my hands at each moment—in short, she embarrassed me greatly. I was far from supposing that this young person was one day to become my enemy. Madame Necker had educated her very ill; she suffered her to pass three

quarters of each day in her saloon, among the crowd of *beaux esprits* of the time who were constantly about Madame Necker; and while her mother attended to other persons, and especially to the ladies who came to pay her visits, the *beaux esprits* entered into dissertations with Mademoiselle Necker on the passions and on love. The solitude of her chamber and a few good books would have been more to her advantage. She learned to talk fast and much, without any reflection, and she has written in the same manner. She had read little, and all her knowledge was superficial; she has collected in her works, not the results of sound reading, but an infinite number of recollections and incoherent conversations. Madame Necker was a virtuous, calm, and reserved person, without any fancy; she had caught from her acquaintance with M. Thomas, an emphatic tone of language which contrasted singularly with the coldness of her sentiments and her manners; she was *studied* in all she did; she arranged beforehand *a part* for all situations, for society, and even for the intimate commerce of life; she confesses this herself in her *Souvenirs*. She there lays down the rules to be observed in a familiar conversation with a friend. With all these preparations, she was always in equal good humour; she was obliging, and even calculating only on the self-

love of others, she was in the constant habit of dealing out excessive praises. The following curious anecdote relative to Madame Necker was related to me by a person, who of all men was the least likely to say what was not true, the Chevalier de Chastellux. Dining one day at Madame Necker's he happened to arrive first of the company, and so early that the mistress of the house was not yet in the drawing-room. In walking about, he saw on the ground under Madame Necker's chair a little book which he picked up; it was a white paper book, of which several pages were in the handwriting of Madame Necker. He would certainly in any other case have refrained from reading a page of it; but thinking it could only contain some detached and brilliant thoughts, he read it without scruple; it was the *preparation* for the very dinner to which he was invited: Madame Necker had written it the evening before, and it contained all she was to say to the most remarkable persons at table; his name was there, and after it these words, "I must talk to the Chevalier de Chastellux about *Public Happiness** and *Agathe*."†

* A work on *Public Happiness* by M. de Chastellux.—(*Note by the Author.*)

† A comedy by the same author, never printed.—(*Note by the Author.*)

Madame Necker mentioned next, that she was to talk to Madame d'Angevillers about love, and that she would bring about a *literary discussion* between Messieurs Marmontel and De Guibert. There were other preparations, which I have forgotten. After reading the little book, M. de Chastellux hastened to replace it under the chair. A moment afterwards, a valet-de-chambre entered to say, that Madame Necker had forgotten her pocket-book in the drawing-room. It was found, and carried to Madame Necker. The dinner was delightful to M. de Chastellux, who saw that Madame Necker said word for word what she had written in her pocket-book.

M. Necker, whose writings are so full of pomp and swell, was remarkable for his ease in conversation. He owed to a short, stout, vulgar face, an air of *bonhommie,* and this, added to his clever conversation, in which there generally mingled a little causticity, gave him an appearance of originality. He had a great deal of talent, and would have been a good writer, if he had not formed his style in the emphatic school of M. Thomas. The natural elegance of his manners would have rendered him distinguished, if he had not spoiled it by ostentation, and by every absurdity which springs from vanity and unbounded pretensions.

I dined twice at Madame Necker's; she came frequently to Belle Chasse. I never asked a single favour of M. Necker, but I admired his *Compte Rendu;* and when M. Necker was exiled, with an order not to come nearer Paris than forty leagues, M. de Sillery authorized me to offer him for a year the estate of Sillery to reside upon. He did not accept the offer, because he had obtained permission to reside at St. Ouen; but such a proposal surely deserved to be remembered. When afterwards I was a fugitive in Switzerland, though I did not write to Madame Necker, I am sure she could not be ignorant of my situation: in her place, I should have thought I owed some marks of attention to a person, who had given me so evident a proof of hers.

I have made frequent remarks on Madame de Staël, then daughter, in my writings, but only upon such principles as she has herself judged to be reprehensible, and of which she afterwards made a sincere abjuration; but so far from ever having attacked her person or her talents, I have always had the greatest pleasure in rendering her complete justice, and even in relating several traits of her life which were not known, and were equally honourable to her mind and heart.

At Belle Chasse I experienced during the

princes' education, as I have stated, many vexations; but I was completely happy in essentials; my pupils were docile and charming, the plan of their education was generally admired, and their progress recompensed me for all my pains. I wished that the princes should learn Greek. They themselves did not desire this, and I was unwilling to force their inclinations. I took a teacher for myself, and they saw me with admiration read the Greek characters. I affected great enthusiasm for the language, and in the course of six weeks, they begged that they might have a master. I then added to the number of their teachers an excellent Greek scholar, a man equally learned and virtuous, M. Le Coupey. I stopped at the Greek roots, which have been useful to me in my botanical studies, and in teaching me the etymology of some words in our own language. My pupils soon acquired a knowledge of the Greek, taking their lessons in my room.

It was at Belle Chasse that the most brilliant events of my life happened—the marriages of my two daughters. It was Madame de Pont, intendante of Moulins, one of my friends, who gave me the idea of the marriage of my second daughter. M. de Genlis had not yet come into possession of the Maréchale d'Etrée's property: his debts had

obliged him to sell the estate of Sissy. The favours I had obtained at the Palais Royal on the marriage of my eldest daughter took away all possibility of my requesting new ones for that of the second. I was thus cut off from the hope of a good match for her; and this was to me the subject of continual uneasiness. Madame de Pont advised me to profit by the friendship of Madame de Montesson for the Viscount de Valence, who would easily induce her to give him my daughter in marriage with a fortune. Madame de Pont undertook to speak to her on the subject: and as she had foreseen my aunt, who would not have done any thing in any other case, performed in this far more than we could have anticipated. It was agreed that she should take my daughter to live in her house. Pulchérie was married by the Bishop of Cominge in the chapel belonging to my aunt's house, and a few days afterwards she was carried to her estate at Sainte Assise. M. de Valence was twenty-nine years of age and my daughter seventeen: her face was beautiful, her heart excellent, and her principles as pure as her soul. She had read much; she was accomplished; she painted flowers and miniatures, and made charming cameos; she read aloud in an admirable manner both in prose and verse; and there was in

her understanding a mixture of cleverness and delicacy which gave her afterwards a peculiar charm in society: the excess of vivacity she had exhibited in her childhood was now corrected, and she had become as mild and as docile as she was naturally full of goodness, gentleness, and feeling. This is the picture of what she was when she left me, and what, in my opinion, she has always been.

I must confess, with the sincerity which I have laid down to myself as a rule in this work, that my ambition for the establishment of my daughter in this instance blinded my understanding and my foresight; in fact, the very motive which determined me upon the marriage ought in reality to have prevented it. What was said about the nature of Madame de Montesson's sentiments with regard to M. de Valence was doubtless untrue; still what she did for him was so extraordinary, that every body was confirmed in the conjectures made on that head, and were universally persuaded that she only brought about this marriage for the purpose of attaching for ever to herself the man she loved. The scandal was pretty generally circulated, and I ought not to have encouraged it by this step. I ought to have reflected that Madame de Montesson, besides being unfit of herself to be a proper guardian, would never be able to feel any real affection for

my daughter; that besides I should act contrary to my ideas of morality, in profiting by a sentiment which was generally thought a blamable one, however *platonic* it might be, in order to forward any ambitious views of my own; but I reassured, without altogether deceiving myself, by the thought that, perhaps there was nothing improper in my aunt's attachment; that besides, supposing M. de Valence to have been the lover of Madame de Montesson, who was then forty-seven years of age, he would assuredly cease to be so on becoming the husband of a charming young woman of seventeen; and lastly, that as my daughter had the utmost confidence in me, I should be able to give her all the counsels that might be necessary to her happiness. In short, my ambition in this affair being only relative, I did not reproach myself severely with it; I never had any feelings of ambition for myself, for I do not call ambition the desire of being distinguished, without vexatious efforts and without cabal, by talent and merit, but I have constantly, as far as my own interest was concerned, despised fortune, at the same time that I have always been ambitious for those I loved: this is a less reprehensible manner of being so, but it is still blamable, especially when it concerns the happiness of one's children. I ought

here to add in the character at once of mother and of veracious historian, that my daughter, on her entrance into society, possessed the purest sentiments and the most perfect principles; and she gave a proof shortly after her marriage of the generosity of her disposition. M. de Valence lost a considerable sum at play, and in order to prevent him from having recourse to Madame de Montesson, as he had often done before, she gave up of her own accord her finest diamonds: she had received very splendid ones from the Duke of Orleans on her marriage; M. de Valence sold them and paid his debt, and Madame de Valence never claimed their value, and never received it of her husband. I could cite many traits as striking of her generosity.

I ought here to refute a very false and scandalous story relative to Madame de Montesson on occasion of my daughter's marriage; this piece of calumny was widely spread, and has been printed in many shapes. The following is the fact to which I allude: it was said that the Duke of Orleans, who was supposed to be absent from home, entered my aunt's cabinet unexpectedly, and found M. de Valence at her feet; upon which my aunt, without discovering any emotion, and with *admirable* presence of mind, said to the prince,

pointing to M. de Valence, "He is entreating me earnestly, as you see, to grant him the hand of my niece." It was pretended that this was the only reason of his marriage with my daughter; but I can truly say that the whole anecdote is a pure fiction, and entirely destitute of foundation.

At the death of the old Duke of Orleans, I asked his son for my brother the best place at the Palais Royal—that of chancellor; and I felt myself authorized in making the demand, by the immense services my brother had rendered the duke. Two years before the death of the old Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Chartres found his affairs in so embarrassed a state, that he was quite in despair; for his people of business had told him that it was impossible for him to avoid bankruptcy. In his extremity I advised him to have recourse to the advice of my brother, who, by a fortunate speculation, prevented the bankruptcy, and paid all his debts in ready money.* All this plan was constructed, arranged, and concluded with great promptitude: my brother refused all remuneration and recompense, and contented himself with soliciting, in general terms, the prince's protection;

* By taking land from the garden of the Palais Royal, in order to build the shops and galleries which are still standing; this produced enormous sums.—*(Note by the Author.)*

so that the place of chancellor was justly due to him. Yet, in spite of all this, (a thing which hurt me extremely,) it was not without some trouble that I obtained it. It was the first favour I ever asked of the Duke of Orleans; this favour was on his part only an act of justice, and in order to obtain it, I was obliged to threaten, that if it was refused I should give up the education of the children, and withdraw from the charge. At length the place was granted to my brother, who by the plan of the shops in the Palais Royal, considerably augmented the revenues of the Duke of Orleans; and in every particular, during the whole of his administration, he managed the affairs of his master with as much intelligence and talent as probity.

It was during my residence at Belle Chasse that M. de Genlis, after the marriage of my second daughter, came into possession of the property of the Maréchale d'Etrée. Every one supposed, and we ourselves had no doubt, that notwithstanding the last wishes of her father, the Maréchale d'Etrée would leave the whole of her property to my brother-in-law, who continued to pay her, along with my sister-in-law, the most assiduous court. She died suddenly of apoplexy, as did all the persons of the Louvois family. There

was no will at first to be found; in that case the property would have been divided among the collateral branches of the family; as we thought for three days it would be. During this time there was a public inventory made of the furniture, and there was a large desk just about to be sold, when the buyer in examining it touched a spring which disclosed a little drawer, in which was found a portfolio of blue velvet embroidered with gold. The portfolio was opened, and in it was found a will constituting M. de Genlis universal legatee: he was made acquainted immediately with the event, and came to communicate it to me at Belle Chasse. On finding himself suddenly possessed of one hundred thousand francs a year, without counting the jewels, the diamonds, and the furniture, he urged me to quit Belle Chasse, and to resume my proper place, which was to reside with him. This was my duty: but I wished to finish what I had begun. I was attached to my pupils, and I thought it would be pitiful to leave them merely because I had become rich; my self-love could not support the idea that the governor and governess, who should take my place and finish their education should carry away from me all the honours of it. For these reasons, in spite of the arguments of M. de Genlis, I persisted in a re-

solution which has cost me dear. If I had fulfilled my real duty, which was to rejoin him, especially when he desired and entreated it so earnestly, I might easily have induced him to leave France at the same time that I quitted it myself: he might at that time without any difficulty have carried with him one hundred thousand francs; we should have lived comfortably in a foreign land, and he would not have perished on a scaffold! . . . . This terrible reflection causes me eternal remorse; since his death it never leaves me: I have expressed the feeling in my work called *Les Parvenus.* The *Journal of Edélie,* written in the valley of Josaphat, speaking of a similar situation, expresses no feeling which I have not experienced. How often have I reflected since, that nothing is so lovely as our duty! and that the actions which appear to us the noblest and most generous, which prevent us from following it, are either real errors or at best but illusions of our vanity!

M. de Genlis immediately made an honourable use of his unexpected good fortune, by settling on his brother, who was ruined, fifteen thousand francs a-year with reversion to his wife; and this was so well secured, that both enjoyed it to the period of their death; this action was the more honourable to M. de Genlis, as his brother had

never, even before his ruin, rendered him a single service in money matters, and my husband, besides, paid him for our board during the three years we passed at Genlis. A short time after M. de Genlis came into possession of this property, he took the name of Marquis of Sillery.

I had always felt an extreme desire of travelling in England. At length I yielded to my wishes a short time before the revolution. This was the only instance in which I was separated from my pupils during the whole course of their education, and then it was only for six weeks. I left them all at Saint Leu. My mother had the goodness to replace me as the governess of Mademoiselle, and M. Lebrun and the Abbé Guyot in the charge of the princes. My journey to England was marked by many distinctions. No woman is allowed to enter the House of Commons, but that assembly, by a special order, allowed me to be present at one of the debates. I was not allowed to introduce any other woman. Lord Inchiquin led me into the House. Tragedy was not played in the summer, yet in honour to me, *Hamlet* was performed at one of the theatres. An account of all these things was inserted in the English newspapers, with the most complimentary notices of myself. There appeared also, in the journals, an

infinite number of verses in my honour, among others, a fine ode by Mr. Hayley, which has been printed in his works. I received many marks of interest and esteem from the most distinguished persons in England, among others, from Messieurs Fox, Sheridan, Hayley, Lord Mansfield, Lady Stormont, the Duchess of Devonshire, Messieurs Swinbourne, Paradise, and Planta, the two latter directors of the British Museum; Sir J. and Lady Hume, Mr. Burke, Lady Harcourt, Mr. and Miss Wilkes, Miss Burney, authoress of *Cecilia*, Lord William Gordon, &c. in short, from all the persons of whom I had any knowledge before I left France; I put none of these things into our French papers; I did not even write them to my friends; I contented myself with inscribing them in my journal. To be sure, on this journey I was so much in company, that I had no time for writing letters; all my time was spent in excursions, visits, and entertainments. The Prince of Wales, whose whole household was gone to Brighton, did me the honour to send Lord Gordon to me, whom I did not know, to invite me to an entertainment at Lord Gordon's, which he had it not in his power to give me at his own palace. I went; the entertainment was delightful, and the prince was full of attention to me. He had then

a very handsome face, and the most agreeable smile I ever saw—which always gives, in my opinion, a peculiar charm to a countenance. The celebrated Mr. Burke, whom I only knew by reputation, quitted his country house to come to London, in order to offer me a sight of the university of Oxford, with an invitation to pass three days at his country house, which was on the road. I consented. On this excursion, we first stopped at the Duchess of Portland's, which lay in our way. It was this lady who gave an asylum to Jean Jacques Rousseau, who afterwards so unjustly quarrelled with her.

On our arrival, we found the duchess at the point of death; she died in the night; but the park was opened to us, where we walked about for three hours; it was superb. There is to be seen there a singular curiosity—the remains of the fortifications, in a state of high preservation, of a Danish camp. I passed three very agreeable days at Mr. Burke's, where I saw Mr. Windham, who was afterwards so celebrated; in company he was one of the mildest and most amiable of men; I I also met there Sir Joshua Reynolds, the best portrait painter in England. Mr. Burke carried me to Oxford, where we passed two days. In the chapel of Christ's College, I admired the fine

stained glass-windows, then newly painted by Reynolds; he has there represented Hope in an ingenious manner, seen from behind, with her head lifted towards heaven, and her arms raised towards the clouds. There is a vagueness in the idea, which is in perfect harmony with the subject.

On my return to London, I received a message from the Queen, who dispatched M. Duluc,* her reader, to invite me to Windsor where she passed the summer; this was a great distinction, for she never received foreigners there. I dined at Windsor with Madame La Fitte, under governess of the princesses, with whom I had been in correspondence; she had sent me a little work of her

* The author of several esteemed scientific works. It is well known that in general the title of reader to a prince is merely an honorary title; but the Queen of England really loved reading, and at Windsor, where that princess lived in complete privacy, M. Duluc was daily summoned to read for three or four hours; he always found the queen alone in her cabinet, and read while she embroidered or worked tapestry; but what is chiefly remarkable is the extreme rigour of the etiquette in a country where there has been so much discussion on liberty and the rights of man. M. Duluc assured me that he had always read to the queen without being allowed a seat; he was constantly on his legs in one spot, reading for three or four hours, as I have stated; and the queen listened and embroidered tranquilly, without paying any attention to the painful situation of her unhappy reader. None of our princes have ever been guilty of such a want of humanity.—*(Note by the Author.)*

own, entitled *Conversations* of a governess with her pupils, of which, at her request, I undertook the editorship, and to which I wrote a preface, I had a private audience of more than two hours with the queen; there was no one present but the princesses her daughters, and her lady of honour, Lady Pembroke, who introduced me, and with whom I had been acquainted previously at the *Isle Adam*. The conversation was very animated; I found the queen equally obliging in her manner and clever in conversation; I was particularly pleased with the Princess Royal, afterwards Queen of Wirtemberg. The queen had the goodness to send me a basket full of excellent pine-apples, and hearing that I was fond of botany, she informed me that she had given orders to Mr. Eaton her gardener at Kew, to allow me to collect any plants I chose to put into my herbal, and any seeds I might wish. I have never seen any botanic garden so admirable as that of Kew; all the aquatic plants are there placed in large ponds, and the saxatile plants among rocks. Besides the picturesque effect which this arrangement gives, it allows the plants to acquire all the vigour and beauty natural to them, by their position in situations which agree with them.

On this journey I made the conquest of the

moss-rose. Lord Mansfield, the celebrated English judge,* wrote to me to request permission to visit me. I received this venerable old man, who was full of talent and learning with great pleasure. I do not know how he came to hear that the tenth of July was my birth-day, but he sent me a basket full of moss-roses; I had never seen any specimens of this beautiful flower, and I was delighted with these; when I left England, he gave me in a box a complete rose-tree, which I carried to Paris, and which was the first ever seen there.† I made an excursion to Marlborough, where the duchess then was; as I was not at all acquainted with her, I did not ask to see her; my name was not asked, and I walked about the park without being known, but when I was about to go away, a large blank book was brought me, in which I was requested to write my name; I left Blenheim immediately after. The duchess, to whom the register was carried, being sure that I would stop at the turnpike, sent after me a valet-de-chambre with an immense basket of pine-apples, at least as fine as those of Windsor. I offered the valet-de-chambre

* He was the friend of Pope, and in his house were several portraits of that celebrated poet.—*(Note by the Author.)*

† Which I afterwards gave to the famous florist Descemet.—*(Note by the Author.)*

a guinea, who refused it, saying, "*Madam, I cannot accept it, I am a Frenchman.*" This expression made me feel how much I was also a Frenchwoman.

I saw thoroughly all that was curious in London and its environs. Mr. Horace Walpole, the intimate friend of Madame du Deffant, invited me to breakfast at his gothic priory. An entertainment was given me in the gardens of Waller the poet, in the part where there are precipices of tremendous depth; at the bottom of one of these precipices you see a broken bridge with an antique, mutilated statue, which is so fine that Sir Joshua Reynolds offered for it twelve thousand francs and a good picture of his own, but the offer was refused.

Since I am on the subject of the curious things to be seen in England, in order to bring together the principal ones, I shall here give the details of what struck me most in my two journeys, and I shall begin with relating the story of the two friends at Llangollen, with whom I only became acquainted on my second visit to England, on which occasion I was accompanied by Mademoiselle d'Orleans. We were at Bury, where there was daily to be found a very select society. One evening the conversation turned upon friendship, and I said I would willingly un-

dertake a long journey for the sake of seeing two persons who had been long united by a sincere bond of friendship. "Then, Madam," replied Mr. Stewart,* "you should go to Llangollen, where you will see a model of perfect friendship; and the picture will seem to you the more beautiful, as it will show you an example of friendship between two young women, who are in every respect charming. Should you like to hear the story of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, sister of the famous speaker in the parliament of Ireland?" "I should be delighted."—"I will then relate it to you."

"Lady Eleanor Butler, now (1788) about twenty-eight years of age, was born in Dublin. An orphan from the cradle, and a rich, amiable, and lovely heiress, her hand was sought by persons of the best families in Ireland; but she very early announced her repugnance to marriage. This taste for independence, which she never concealed, was in no respect injurious to her reputation; her behaviour was always marked by perfect propriety; no woman was ever more remarkable for mildness, modesty, and all the virtues that embellish her sex. From earliest infancy she was

* Afterwards Lord Castlereagh, who died about three years since, after being prime minister, and bearing the title of Lord Londonderry.—*(Note by the Author.)*

the intimate friend of Miss Ponsonby; by a singular coincidence of events, which struck their imaginations, they were both born at Dublin, in the same year and on the same day, and they became orphans at the same period. It was easy for them to fancy from this, that heaven had created them for each other; that it had destined them to consecrate their mutual existence to each other, and to perform together the voyage of life, in the bosom of peace, of confidence, and of independence. Their sensibility enabled them to realize this illusion. Their friendship so increased with their age, that at seventeen they mutually promised to preserve their liberty, and never to part from each other. They formed from that moment the plan of withdrawing from the world, and of fixing themselves for ever in the profoundest solitude. Having heard of the charming landscapes of Wales, they made a secret journey thither, in order to choose the place of their retreat. They arrived at Llangollen, and there found, on the summit of a mountain, a little isolated cottage, of which the situation seemed to them delicious. There it was that they resolved to fix their abode. The guardians of the young fugitives, however, traced their steps, and brought them back to Dublin. They declared that they would return

to their mountain as soon as they should have attained their majority. In fact, at twenty-one, in spite of all the entreaties and arguments of their relatives, they quitted Ireland for ever, and went to Llangollen. Miss Ponsonby is not rich, but Lady Eleanor possesses a considerable fortune. She purchased the little cottage of the peasants, and the land about the mountain, and built a house upon its site, of which the outside is extremely simple, but the interior of the greatest elegance. On the platform of the mountain, surrounding the cottage, are a court and a flower garden; a hedge of roses is the only fence of that rural habitation. A commodious carriage-way was made in the mountain, of which the too rapid slope was remedied by art; on the top of the mountain, however, were allowed to remain some ancient firs of a prodigious height; fruit trees were planted there, and, in particular, a great number of cherry-trees, which produce the finest cherries in England. The two friends still possess, at the foot of the hill, a meadow for their flocks, a beautiful farm-house, and a kitchen garden. These two extraordinary persons, both of whom possess the most cultivated minds, and the most charming accomplishments, have lived in that solitude for seven years, without ever having slept

out of it in a single instance. Nevertheless, they are far from reserved; they frequently pay visits at the neighbouring gentlemen's houses, and receive with equal politeness and kindness, travellers who are either coming from or going to Ireland, and who are recommended to their attention by their old friends."

It was settled that very evening, that we should immediately set out for Llangollen.

This village has not the rich appearance of the other English villages, but nothing can surpass the neatness of the interior of the house, which is, among the peasants, a proof of their being at their ease. Llangollen, surrounded by shady groves and delicious meadows of the freshest green, is situated at the foot of the mountain of the two friends, which forms in that spot a majestic pyramid, covered with verdure and flowers. We arrived at the cottage an hour before sunset. The two friends had received the same morning, by the post, a letter of introduction for me. We were received with a grace, a cordiality, and a charming good-nature, of which it would be impossible to give an idea. I was never tired of regarding two persons so singular for their attachment, and their mode of life. I saw nothing in them of that vanity which is gratified by awaken-

ing the astonishment of others. They loved each other, and lived in that spot with so much simplicity, that wonder soon subsided into a touching interest. Every thing was genuine and natural in their manners and conversation; and a singular thing is, that though they had lived so many years in perfect retirement, they spoke French with as much ease as purity. I was very much struck with the dissimilarity of disposition which existed between them. Lady Eleanor had a charming face, bright with freshness and health; every thing about her announced vivacity, gaiety, and frankness. Miss Ponsonby's face was pale, and full of a melancholy expression. It seemed as if the one had been born in that solitude, so completely did she appear at home in it; for you saw by her easy air that she had not preserved the slightest remembrance of the world or its vain pleasures; the other, pensive and reserved, was too candid and virtuous to allow you to imagine that repentance had led her to this retreat; but you might have thought she had brought along with her the subject of some melancholy regrets. Both had the noblest manners, and the most cultivated minds. An excellent library, composed of the best English, French, and Italian authors, was to them an inexhaustible source of amusement,

and of various and solid occupation; for reading is only profitable, when you have leisure to recur again to what you have read. The interior of the house was remarkable for the beauty of its proportions, the convenient distribution of the apartments, the elegance of the ornaments and the furniture, and the beautiful views which were visible from all the windows. The drawing-room was adorned with charming landscapes, drawn and painted after nature by Miss Ponsonby. Lady Eleanor was a very good musician; and both had filled their solitary dwelling with embroidery, of which the work was extraordinary. Miss Ponsonby, whose hand-writing was the most beautiful I ever saw, had made extracts of the most beautiful pieces, in verse and prose, written in her own hand, and embellished with arabesques in the finest taste, which formed a very precious collection. The arts were there cultivated with equal success and modesty, and you admired their productions in this secluded spot, with a feeling which could not be experienced elsewhere. You were delighted to find, in this peaceful retreat, so much merit, sheltered from the attacks of satire and of envy, and talents that, free from ostentation and pride, never desired in that spot other suffrages than those of friendship! This evening was an

enchanting one to me; and no unpleasing reflection came to trouble its sweetness. I went to bed, but my mind was so full of what I had seen and heard, that my thoughts prevented me for a long time from sleeping. At length, I was sinking into slumber, when I was awakened by the most melodious sounds. Much surprised, I listened: it was not music, but a vague and celestial melody, which sunk into the soul. By dint of attention, I discovered that the sounds were produced by a violent wind which had just arisen. My ear distinguished in the distance the roar and the hissing generally caused by a storm; but the winds, changing their nature as they approached that asylum of peace and friendship, only formed, as they touched its walls and its trees, an enchanting harmony. I was easily disposed to believe in prodigies, yet I wished to discover the cause of this one; but I did not dare to rise, lest I should awaken Mademoiselle d'Orleans, who was much fatigued with her journey, and was asleep in a bed placed by the side of mine. Suddenly the tempest dropped, and the harmonious sounds I had heard seemed to be borne away on the winds as they became still. It seemed as if the music reascended to the clouds; and I thought I might catch, by raising my head, its last echoes. I listened with

rapture, and if, like St. Cecilia, I had held my harp in my hands, I should have let it fall on the ground, and all earthly music, from that moment, would have sounded to me insipid.

The next morning the mystery was explained. On opening my window, I found on the balcony an instrument with which I was altogether unacquainted, called in England *an Æolian harp;* it is an invention for producing harmony from the winds, which, when they sweep over its strings, produce ravishing music. It is natural enough that such an instrument should have originated in an island of storms, amid tempests, of which it softens the terrors.

I walked about the whole morning with the two friends. Nothing can equal the beauty of the sites which surround the mountain which overhangs them, and of which the two ladies occupied the summit. It seemed as if, dwelling on that elevated spot, they were the sovereigns of the beautiful country around them. On the north, they had a view of the village, and of a forest; on the south, a long stream bathed the foot of the mountain, and fertilized immense meadows, beyond which the eye could discover an amphitheatre of hills, covered with trees and rocks.

In the midst of this wild and sylvan abode, rose

a majestic tower, which seemed to be the Pharos of the banks of the river, but which is nothing more than the ruins of a magnificent castle, once inhabited by the sovereign of the country. All this solitary tract of land was once populous and flourishing; it was now abandoned to the wildness of nature, and the eye could only see flocks of goats and a few scattered shepherds, seated on the rocks and playing on the Irish harp. This harp does not resemble ours. Opposite to this rustic and melancholy view, the two friends had placed a verdant seat, shaded by two poplars; and there it was, they told me, that they came in the summer season to read the poetry of Ossian.

I experienced in the course of that day emotions very different from those I had felt the evening before. Reflection and reason dissipated all the illusions which had led me to envy the lot of the two friends. I still thought them as amiable and interesting! but I felt that I was called on rather to pity than admire them. On this earth, where every thing is so fleeting, we must preserve many ties, or renounce them all, to give ourselves up without reserve to the Eternal Being who alone can realize our hopes, and fix our wavering inclinations. In the natural state of society, the affections which a family calls forth, form in the course of our lives a ne-

cessary succession of consolations: a spouse consoles us for the loss of a mother; the hands of our children are destined to dry up other tears; a brother partakes our domestic griefs; and a faithful friend recompenses us for the loss of a false one. Let us then cultivate all our ties; let us not, in the thorny career over which we have to pass, reject any of our natural supports; if one of them fails, another will be ready to sustain our declining steps.

The greatest of evils to a profoundly sensible bosom, is the nourishment of an exclusive and passionate attachment for a dependant and fragile being, from whom a thousand accidents may separate us, and whom death may snatch away. However pure that affection may be, it must always be a source of inevitable torments; and if it be exempt from remorse, it can never be free from harassing disquietudes.

These ideas made such an impression on my mind, that I saw no longer in the two friends any thing but the imprudent victims of the most dangerous enthusiasm and sensibility. After selecting such a lot, and entering into such engagements, they were chained as it were for ever to this mountain! . . . . But what a terrible future lay before them, if one was to survive the other, and to be

left alone without aid or consolation, charged with the sacred task of rendering her the last offices, and of arranging her obsequies! . . . . Or whether both, becoming infirm at the same period, deprived of sight and hearing, were to pass the last years of their life without seeing or hearing each other, and without being able to attend to each other's mutual comfort! together and yet separate, since they could no longer be said to exist for one another; a situation as strange as deplorable, and of which the constancy of friendship only serves to aggravate the horrors! In the eyes of the worldly, the state of a Carmelite would seem less to be pitied. If our philosophers are touched by the privations the latter experiences in her youth, it is at least impossible for them not to allow that her old age may be perfectly happy. With what serenity, with what joy her steps approach the tomb! . . . . and we do not often enough remark that old age is the longest period of life,—it may last forty years.

The two friends of Llangollen had one means of securing to themselves a happy old age; it was to educate and to adopt children, and thus to form to themselves a family, which might have cheered their solitude, and one day have comforted their old age. I know not whether they have followed

my counsels : since my return to France I have heard of them, and I learned with real grief, that Miss Ponsonby was threatened with dropsy. Nuns alone can dispense with the ties of families, they are altogether devoted to God ; besides, they have companions of their own age, and their latter years glide away in peace, beneath the active and generous protection of Christian charity.

I must not quit Llangollen without mentioning the pure manners of the inhabitants of that part of Wales ; the two friends assured us that their honesty is so notorious, that often when they left their mountain to walk in the neighbourhood, they left the key in their cottage door, and never were robbed of any thing, although they had a considerable quantity of silver plate and an infinite number of little valuable articles, which might have been easily carried away. The inns of Llangollen were distinguished by the neatness peculiar to England.

In my second journey I visited the charming town of Bury. The cemetery of that town is remarkable for the beauty of the antique monuments by which it is surrounded : I was told, that this burial-ground, in the spring and summer, is the rendezvous of lovers, and that in the evening they meet there by the light of the moon. It appears to me that there is only one kind of love, holy, pure,

and deep, which can venture to utter its language in such a spot. Vicious sentiments, or the feelings inspired by caprice, could not endure these tombs, these ruins, and these cypress shades. There no one durst pronounce with levity, and without deep thought, the vow of love that is unchangeable till death! I figure to myself two young lovers, escaped from the eye of an avaricious and severe guardian; (for I will not fancy them under the authority of their parents, since they meet in secret;) I see them arrive, and find themselves, for the first time in their lives, alone together. They approach each other with all the innocence yet violence of a first love, and seat themselves on a tomb opposite one of those Gothic monuments with which the spot is surrounded. I see their tears flowing! . . . . The violent agitation they feel forms a striking contrast with the tranquillity of that abode of death. Here it is that all human passions are annihilated for ever! and yet here, youthful lovers, ye dare to yield to the most tumultuous sentiments which can agitate the bosom; here it is that ye swear to love each other eternally! . . . They speak! . . . With what attention I mark their words! . . . The calm of the night, the placid brightness of the moon, the harmonious reflected light which it showers on these venerable monuments the firs and the cypresses

which rise majestically among the tombs, and of which the fine outline is marked in deepest shade on these antique towers: this assemblage of imposing objects, so full of religious awe and funereal impressiveness, exalt all the sentiments of the soul by the profound melancholy they inspire. How touching and pure must be the language of the lovers! . . . It is at fêtes and balls that lovers borrow the fantastic language of poetry; there it is that they compare their mistresses to Venus, and talk of their graces and their beauty: here Love expresses himself in the tone of the holiest friendship; his words are the language of the soul and of virtue, and it is the Eternal himself whom he calls to witness a vow which he believes will bind him for ever. Alas! this vow is perhaps uttered over the tomb of some victim of love! . . . If it be so, it was doubtless a woman. . . . The seductions or the ingratitude of an ungrateful lover may have dug her grave! . . . Perhaps she was the friend of her whose feet are now treading on her ashes, and is now exposing herself to the same dangers! . . . Imprudent and youthful girl! be warned by this recollection. Thou comest to dream of happiness on the edge of a precipice; soon wilt thou pay dearly for this moment of illusion; thou hast lost for many a year thy peace and tranquillity of mind! . . . Yet thou wilt leave, pure and spotless,

the scene of thy first interview, but grant not a second; there thy innocence would be lost: go, thou hast known all that love can bestow of sweetness and enchantment, it never can again restore to thee the charm of that first meeting.

The son-in-law of Richardson was still alive; his name was Mr. Bridget; he belonged to the Royal Society of London; he was somewhat rude in manner, but as he possessed an original portrait of Richardson, I was anxious to see him. I wrote to request permission to call upon him, and he had the politeness to call at my residence to take me up. I went over his house with great interest, and saw the original picture of Richardson; he was fair, short in stature, rather fat, and his physiognomy and eyes were expressive of the greatest mildness. Sir Joshua Reynolds had showed me an original portrait of Milton, who had a face somewhat in the shape of that of Richardson. I had the pleasure of sitting in Mr. Bridget's garden on the bench on which Richardson used to sit, the right arm of the seat opened and held an inkstand; here he used to compose and write a great part of the morning. Mr. Bridget became so much attached to me, that he offered to give me a manuscript copy of the novel of Pamela, with corrections in the margin in the handwriting of Richardson himself, on condition of my giving

him my word of honour that I would myself translate it literally. As it would have been impossible for me to have translated it without making many alterations, I declined entering into such an engagement, but I offered to have it translated under my own eyes, and with all possible care; this he refused. Richardson is not interred at Westminster: the English do not esteem this author so highly as we do, because he is not in the rank of their best writers, and because he has attempted to describe the great world, with which he was not acquainted; but he has so admirably described the human heart, and human passions, and virtues; he has laid open so skilfully the heart of a virtuous, ingenuous, and feeling woman, that he will always deserve to be placed in the first class of moralists. Mr. Bridget took me into the church-yard of Saint Bride, where the remains of Richardson are deposited without a monument. Mr. Bridget told me that the year preceding, he had carried Madame de Tessé to the same spot, when she came to make a little tour in England; and that she had prostrated herself on the tomb, which is none other than the pavement of the church. Mr. Bridget added, that Madame de Tessé had uttered so many groans and shed so many tears, that he was seriously afraid she had fainted. I did not discover my enthusiasm in this way: I did not

frighten Mr. Bridget by my grief; and yet he was so fully persuaded of my admiration of his father-in-law, that he promised, of his own accord, to do for me what he had never done for any one—to send me a miniature copy of the portrait of Richardson; he kept his word, and a month after my return to France, I received this precious portrait.

Miss Wilkes, daughter of the celebrated Mr. Wilkes, of the opposition party, came to see me; she was about thirty-five years old, very plain, but very clever; she spoke many languages, and was remarkable for her reading and information; she paid me a great many kind attentions, and I became very intimate with her. Her father was notorious for his quarrels with government, the boldness of his opinions, and the violence with which his party had caused him to be appointed Lord Mayor. I dined twice with him, his conversation was highly amusing; he had often seen Voltaire during the residence of the latter in London, and told me that he did not understand English well, and was incapable of feeling the beauties of the English poets. He related to me many instances of his jealousy and animosity against Pope; and every one knows, that he was base enough to denounce him as a *papist*. At Mr. Wilkes's, I saw a thing

which surprised me much; when Mr. Wilkes quitted the post of Lord Mayor, the city of London, as usual, presented him with a splendid piece of silver plate, on which was represented, in *alto relievo*, the assassination of Cæsar in the Senate House. This present was made before the revolution, of which it seemed to be a prelude; it was placed pompously on the chimney of the drawing-room.

All my occupations and excursions did not prevent me, on my first tour to London, to take, during my stay there, two masters, the one of English declamation, and the other (a jeweller) to teach me to make various pretty ornaments in seed pearl.

I read a great many English works, and I was struck with the absurd contempt which the writers of this country affect for other nations. This want of dignity and of good breeding proves also a want of greatness of mind and of taste. With what injustice have they criticised our literature at the same time that they were stealing from or copying our writers! Dryden, in his tragedy of the *Death of Antony*, cuts up all our poets; he pretends that our dramatic authors possess a delicacy which is quite ridiculous, and adds: "Their heroes are the civilest persons breathing, but their good educa-

tion rarely extends to a word of good sense, all their wit lies in their ceremonies; they want the genius which animates our play-writers, and, consequently, it is necessary for them, seeing they cannot please, at least, to guard against whatever may offend. But as the most polished man in company is generally the most stupid, so these authors must lull us to sleep as long as they are afraid of being so impolite as to make us laugh or weep."

Throughout this passage, no exception is made in favour of Corneille or Racine. On the contrary, Dryden says, that Corneille's plays are cold and declamatory; and that those of Racine are insipid and display no genius. He ridicules especially the tragedy of *Phèdre*, and laughs at the folly of Hippolyte, who refuses to tell her father plainly that Phèdre had endeavoured to corrupt her. (I soften the phrase which he employs.) None of the English authors, even the sage Addison, have been just towards us. How are we represented on the English stage? The French are always treated there as weak fops, and what seems still more singular, as cowards. In short, a Frenchman is never introduced on the English stage but in order to be represented under the most odious colours and in the most ridiculous light. In the most

recent English works, we find the same injustice and the same hatred. Let us compare this with the generous good feeling of our authors, who have so highly praised the English writers, and the English nation! Let us compare English equity and French equity, English taste, and French taste! This, I think I may say without any national vanity, would produce results the most advantageous for us.

The subject of the death of Lucretia, is one which our delicacy refuses to admit on the scene. We could not support the sight of a heroine who should be sullied even if she were not dishonoured by violence. Lucretia appearing on the scene after the outrage of the son of Tarquin, would inspire us with a sort of disgust. This delicacy of feeling belongs only to us; the Germans, and more particularly the English, have no idea of it. They sit without repugnance to see the *Fair Penitent* of Rowe, though Calista, the fair penitent, experiences neither remorse nor true passion, and most unworthily calumniates Lothario, the friend of her husband. A father who condemns his daughter to publish her dishonour by confinement in a room hung with black, by the side of her seducer's dead body, would appear in our eyes only a madman and a barbarian. The *Orphan* of

Otway is not more decent or sensible than the *Fair Penitent* of Rowe; that piece, nevertheless, enjoys great popularity in England. Two brothers who fight, of whom one is killed, and the other commits suicide, because one has violated the bed of the other, and Monimia, an innocent adultress, who ends her days by poison—all this would inspire us rather with horror than pity. *Amboyna*, the famous tragedy of Dryden, presents an inconceivable tissue of horrors. There is in this play also a woman, who is presented to the eyes of the audience, after having undergone the worst of outrages. The Dutch are painted in this piece as monsters and beasts of prey; and their whole nation is accused of depravities and cruelties of the most monstrous description.

The English comedies, with the exception of a few, are the disgrace of their stage; and even those pieces which cannot be said to disgrace it, are such as would certainly not be listened to in a French theatre. All the pieces of Congreve, as far as morality goes, are infamous; those of Wycherley are equally immoral; Farquhar, the gayest of the English comic writers, is neither more moral nor more decent than the rest; his piece called *A Trip to the Jubilee*, especially, pre-

sents some scenes of the most revolting kind. The famous Fielding has written several absurd and infamous comedies; and Otway, so indecent in his tragedies, has surpassed himself in this respect in his comedies. The pen of a woman dares not make even an extract from his piece, entitled *The Soldier's Fortune*; but in that play are to be found all that depraved morals, and lowness of sentiment and language, can show of disgusting; it is in five acts. The *Atheist*, also, in five acts, by the same author, is no less revolting; it contains not a single argument against atheism and in favour of religion; all the personages are vicious, and their morals detestable. The Atheist, fancying himself near his end, makes the most abominable confessions to a debauchee disguised as a priest; and in this play there is a father, who is a libertine and a ruined man, living on the charity of his son, who often reprimands and refuses him money. Dryden, who has so much abused our stage, has written a comedy called *The Kind Keeper*. In this sense, *keeper* means a libertine who supports courtezans. In his piece entitled *The Spanish Friar*, a piece much relished in England, this author has introduced on the stage a real priest, who, for money which a young man gives him,

facilitates his rendezvous, and gives a married woman, who comes to confess to him, love letters and the most infamous advices at the same time.

The English allow themselves to indulge in the most indecent mockeries on the subject of the Catholic religion, and the most atrocious calumnies against the ministers of our worship, while we, scrupulous and faithful observers of the regards due to foreigners, would think, if we were so to conduct ourselves, that we were destitute of good taste and good breeding. Our nation, which passes for being so light and so frivolous, is nevertheless that which shows itself most steadily the friend of decency and modesty; our public is the only one which commands respect; the only public which thinks itself insulted when licentious pictures are presented to its view; the only public, in short, which is severe in its amusements. So much delicacy, joined to so much gaiety, form an amiable and an imposing national character.

The fashion—being in the fashion—are things to which a far higher value is affixed in London than in Paris; and the most absurd fashions, and the most dangerous have always been invented in London. Such, for instance, are the *whiskeys*, carriages disproportionately high, with seats, which risked the lives of the drivers, if they hap-

pened to fall. What shall we say of the *jockeys*, those unfortunate children who are wrapt up in woollen clothing, and who are overheated, and sweated, till their flesh melts and their bodies are reduced to the weight required. All these inventions are far from sensible, but the English, even those of the most reflecting characters, think nothing of all this; while the most frivolous and thoughtless among the French have never imagined any thing of the kind: our journals never contain the frivolous details of new fashions* and women's dresses; the best of the English newspapers contain all these trifles; and besides, on court occasions, they have the most minute description of the dress and diamonds of the queen, the princesses, and all the ladies.

The most frivolous of the arts are the best paid in England: it is only in London that dancers and singers make real fortunes. The taste for novels and ghost stories is certainly livelier in England than in France; and the luxury of the English far surpasses ours.

The English and French are generally judged as we judge individuals in society—by their exterior—which is so deceiving a criterion. Those

* This was written before the Revolution.—(*Note by the Author.*)

who are gay easily pass for harebrained persons; while the taciturn gain at small expense, a reputation for wisdom.

The English are continually vaunting the merit of their nation; this is a respectable kind of vanity of which we have not enough; it is to be wished that we rendered ourselves a little more justice.

When M. Donnézan was blamed for always praising himself, he said, *I do it on purpose; it is always one voice more in my favour, and the one which expresses itself best on the subject.* When all the writers on a country join in repeating the same thing, there are *many voices more in favour of their nation.*

At length I returned to France; my passage by sea was very stormy; and I experienced one of the most violent tempests ever witnessed in the channel. I arrived at Saint Leu after an absence of about six weeks, to the great joy of my pupils, as well as my own.

A short time after my first journey, the marriage of Mademoiselle with the Duke of Angouleme was resolved on; we went to Versailles, where she was baptized. The interview with the duke of Angouleme then took place; and from that time the marriage was publicly talked of. After the be-

trothing, it was decided that the marriage should take place as soon as the young prince should attain the age required by law, of which he then wanted three months. The ladies were selected who were to be attached to the princess's person; I was very graciously consulted on the subject, and charged with the appointment of some to the inferior places; among others, I was to choose two additional waiting-maids for the princess; and on this occasion Monsieur* did me the honour to write to me with his own hand to *recommend* (such were his words) a woman, who had been employed about him during his education, and for whom he wished to obtain the place of waiting-maid in the establishment of the future Duchess of Angouleme. I may thus boast with truth, that one of our monarchs has done me the honour of writing me a *letter of solicitation*. The revolution which burst suddenly on us at this time, overthrew all these projects, as it did so many others. The short space of a few months sufficed to annihilate the best founded hopes, as it did the most solidly established conditions, and opened an unbounded field to the most daring and measureless ambition.

* Afterwards Louis XVIII.—*(Note by the Author.)*

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